

### **Author's Dedication**

To His Holiness Mar Ignatius Aphram I, Barsoum,  
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, the Successor of St. Peter the Apostle,  
I dedicate this book entitled *History of the Syrian Church of India*,  
for the gracefulness he bestowed on me. May God keep him a living symbol of the  
Church and a pride of orthodoxy.

### **Translator's Dedication**

To the glorious memory of Mar Ignatius Butrus (Peter) IV,  
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East (1872–1894),  
who single handedly revived the Syrian Church of India with his spiritual insight,  
prudence and dynamic personality, this translation is dedicated.

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## FOREWORD

Some venerable Syrians of Iraq suggested to me to write a history of the Syrian Church of India and its interrelation with the Apostolic See of Antioch. Since India was subject to the Patriarchate of Antioch and a knowledge of its condition concerns every Syrian Orthodox, and since the Syrians of that country enjoy a prominent cultural and social status, I thought it appropriate to fulfill their request, especially that I spent more than twelve years in India and acquired comprehensive knowledge about the Syrians and their customs. The following chapters contain the most authentic accounts based on reliable ancient and modern Syriac, Arabic, English and Malayalam sources printed or in manuscript form. I hope that this book will receive the acceptance of scholars which will enable me to discern the noble purpose of writing it.

At Our Bishopric Residence  
June 6, 1951.



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10. The *Order of Vigil, Metrical Hymns of Festivals and the Dispensation of the Lord*, copied by the monk Hidaya Shammo in 1673.
11. *The Order of Ordinations* in the handwriting of Bishop Hidaya dated 1685 and 1690.
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13. The journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah of Aleppo to Malabar in Syriac, and a tract in Arabic on the Church of Malabar.
14. A Catechism in Arabic by Maphryono Shukr Allah.
15. An account of a journey in Arabic by the Chorepiscopus Jirjis of Aleppo.
16. A short exposition of the Lord's Prayer in Syriac by Bishop Yuhanna of Mosul.
17. The decision of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith against Gabriel the Nestorian Metropolitan dated 1722, a statement of his faith upon returning to orthodoxy and the statement of faith of Tuma IV, in Syriac.
18. The election of Dionysius I, and his *homologia* (statement of faith) at his ordination in Syriac.

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42. Rev. Daniel, *The Syrian Church of Malabar*.
43. *A Tract on the Episcopacy of the Christians of St. Thomas* by a Catholic writer dated November 16, 1941.
44. Awgen, *History of the Church of Malabar* in Syriac in a manuscript.
45. Travancore State Manual.
46. Joseph Ittoop Ritter, *History of the Syrian Christians of Malabar*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed. 1906 in Malayalam.
47. Rev. Jirjis Khayyat. *Nubdha Qadima fi Akhbhar Kaldan Malabar*, 1858. (An Ancient Treaties Containing the Chronicles of the Chaldeans of Malabar), an Arabic manuscript (A copy of this manuscript is in the possession of Matti Moosa, translator of this book).
48. A Syriac manuscript containing two treatises: one by the priest Philip Edavazhikal on the *History of the Church of Malabar until, 1816*; the other by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal which is a continuation of this history until 1840. It also contains correspondence, discourses, comments and the number of churches of Malabar.
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# PART ONE: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDIAN CHURCH AND ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

## CHAPTER ONE: THE COUNTRY OF INDIA

The original country of India is located west of the kingdom of China, south of the country of the Afghans and Persians and east of the Indian Ocean. In the remote past the Indians lived in the Island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean. The name “Socotra” comes from the Sanskrit Sukhatara, meaning “The Place of Rest.”<sup>1</sup> Ancient writers called India proper and the countries of Yemen and Ethiopia as India. This is why the people of “black race” were sometimes called Ethiopians and other times, Indians. This is proven by several solid Biblical testimonies. According to the *Pshitto* (Simple) Syriac version of the Bible, The Prophet Jeremiah says, “Can the Indian change his skin?” (Jeremiah, 13: 23.). By Indian, he meant Ethiopian and not the inhabitant of proper India. In the *Book of Acts*, the eunuch who was baptized by the Apostle Philip is called, “an Ethiopian eunuch in charge of the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians.” (Acts 8: 27). In fact, he was an Arab from the country of Saba.<sup>2</sup> This was confirmed by the Syrian philosopher Jacob of Edessa (d.708) who said, “Since time immemorial no

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<sup>1</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas* (in Malayalam), paragraph 2, page 6. The author gives no information about the place and date of publication. It was written in English and published posthumously by the author’s son at Kottayam in 1908. It was also translated and published in Malayalam. See E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, ed. .Dr. Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolyil (Cheeranchira, Changanacherry, India: Mor Adai Study Centre, 2002), editor’s Note, 9 and the same Introduction, 11–12. Following the author’s Malayalam version, I have quoted this English edition throughout. It will be referred to as E. M. Philip, English, See E. M. Philip, English, 24. TRANS.

<sup>2</sup> St Aphram , *The Jewek*; the letter of Jacob of Edessa, to John of Atharb and Dionysius Bar Salibi, *Introduction to the Ten Chapters*.



queen ruled over the kingdom of Abyssinia, also called Ethiopia. However, the kingdom of Saba was ruled by some queens.”<sup>3</sup> Saba’ is the country of Yemen also known in history as the Himyarites country. Nevertheless, it was called Ethiopia and even India.

According to Eusebius of Caesarea, Pantaneus the philosopher priest of Alexandria, traveled through India around the end of the second century preaching Christianity. He found the natives believers using a copy of the Gospel, written in Hebrew (the Aramaic of Palestine), left by the Apostle Bartholomew who was preaching there.<sup>4</sup>

Historians recognize that India was not the present day India proper but Yemen. Historian John Mosheim and others say that it was part of Arabia Felix inhabited by Jews for whom Bartholomew corrected the Hebrew Gospel.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, some historians mention that the brothers Eudocius and Phromentius, who proselytized Ethiopia in the first part of the fourth century, had already preached Christianity in the Indian countries.<sup>6</sup> Undoubtedly, by Indian countries they meant Ethiopia.

Indeed, the term India was also applied to the country of the Qatarites. It is mentioned in the story of the ascetic Rabban (monk) Yunan (Jonah), a pupil of Mar Awgen (Eugenius) in the fourth century, that this story “was written by the monk-priest Zadoi, abbot of St. Thomas Monastery in India located in the country of the Qatarites on the coast of the black island.”<sup>7</sup> This land of the Qatarites is, in fact, Najran and Yamama situated on the Persian Gulf. The said monastery was no other than the one established by

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<sup>3</sup> Jacob of Edessa’s letter to John of Atharb.

<sup>4</sup> See this *History* Book V: 1. This account is found in *Eusebius’s Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Christian Frederick Cruse (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), Book V; 10, p. 199. TRANS.

<sup>5</sup> *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 3: 403 and William Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 97. The author does not give reference to Mosheim. Here is Mosheim’s full passage. He says, “Pantaneus, master of the school at Alexandria, is said to have instructed the Indians in Christianity. But these Indians appear to have been certain Jews, living in Arabia Felix: among whom the apostle Bartholomew had previously instructed the Christian religion. Pantaneus, found among them, according to Jerome, the *Gospel of St. Matthew*, which they had received from their first teacher Bartholomew.” See John Lawrence von Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern*, translated by James Murdock, 1 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1844): 98–99. TRANS.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Rabo (the Syrian), *Chronicle*, 131.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, I (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1891): 466. TRANS.

the Syrian ascetic 'Abd Yesu' in southern Qatar. Around 390, it was inhabited by two hundred monks. Furthermore, the name of India was applied to Afghanistan and north-east Iran. Still, the mountains in the middle of this region are called Hindu Kush.

Obviously, no learned man has any idea about the country known today as India. In one of his poems, our St. Jacob of Sarug (d. 521) differentiates between the Indians and the Cushites. He says,

"All the Indians whom Thomas made subject to the cross:"

"Their faces shall shine like lamps:"

"The black Cushites who were here in our country, their faces shall glow like the rays of the sun."<sup>8</sup>

## CHAPTER TWO: THE FERTILE CRESCENT AND THE INDIAN COUNTRIES

The relations between the Fertile Crescent and India are ancient. On the one hand, the ships of Assyria sailed through the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. In fact, the city of Uru was the center of maritime trade.<sup>9</sup> Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had, by means of ships, relations with India and the Island of Ceylon<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Arsacid Parthian kingdom founded in 226 B. C., was in control of some parts of India.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, there were relations between the ports of the Red Sea and southern India, and Kodungallor was the nearest port for the Egyptian ships. The monsoon also helped the ships to sail directly from the Red Sea to the western coast of India in only forty days. According to Pliny (born 23 A. D.), the Greek navigator Hippalus was first to detect the monsoon.<sup>12</sup> In the first century A. D., the king of Ceylon sent a delegation to the Emperor Tiberias. Pliny also mentions that, in the same century, a detachment of Roman army lived in Kodungallor to help merchants.<sup>13</sup> Pieces of silver, copper and gold coins were also found in Nellore, Coimbatore, Madura, Salem, Malabar and other parts of the province of Madras on which were

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<sup>8</sup> See the odes of Jacob of Sarug, 5: 584.

<sup>9</sup> Addai Scher, *Tarikh Kaldo wa Athur*, I (Beirut: al-Matba'a al-Catholiciyya li al-Aba al-Yasu'iyyin, 1912, reprinted. Michigan: Chaldean Academy, 1993), 3-4. TRANS.

<sup>10</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 2: 11, English 28. TRANS.

<sup>11</sup> The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 23: 308.

<sup>12</sup> E. M. Philip, English, 25-26. TRANS

<sup>13</sup> Philip, 2: 10, English, 26-27. TRANS.

etched the portraits of the Roman Emperors from Augustus to Hadrian.<sup>14</sup> In May, 1842, a vessel was found near Coimbatore containing 522 pieces of silver, 135 of which were of Augustus and 378 of Tiberias.<sup>15</sup>

Mombasa was a flourishing emporium whose ships sailed its rivers to trade with India. The vast Sultanate of Malinda also traded with India. In 1498, Vasco da Gama found in it a group of Jewish merchants. He took some of them on board of his ships in order to show him the route to India.

Moreover, learned men translated Indian sciences into their own languages. In the sixth century Kisra (Khosrau, Chosroes) Anusherwan (531–578), who sponsored the translation of literature and sciences, was informed about the book of *Kalila wa Dimna* written in Sanskrit by the Brahmin philosopher Bidpai. It contained ethics and the training of character. Anusherwan asked the physician-philosopher Barzuyah to translate it into the Pahlavi (Middle Persian). From this translation was made the Syriac version.<sup>16</sup>

In the seventh century the Indian numerals reached the Arabs through the Syrian philosopher Severus Sabukht (d. 667), bishop of Qinnésrin.<sup>17</sup> In the thirteenth century, our philosopher Bar Hebraeus lauded the intelligence of the Indians saying, “God raised them above many brown and white-skinned people. They are the mine of wisdom and the fountain of justice.”<sup>18</sup>

### CHAPTER THREE: ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

The history of the Syrian Church of India dates back to the middle of the first century A. D. Its establishment is attributed to St. Thomas the Apostle.

<sup>14</sup> E. M. Philip, English, 25. TRANS.

<sup>15</sup> Philip, 2: 8, English, 25, not 5. TRANS.

<sup>16</sup> The Nestorian Metropolitan ‘Abd Yeshu’ Subawi (d. 1318), mentioned in his treatise on “Syriac Books and their Authors” a periodeutes (visiting priest) named Bod. He said that Bod wrote treatises (around 570 A. D.) on faith and against Manicheans and the Marcionites. He then said that Bod translated the Book of *Kalila wa Dimna* from the Indian language into Syriac under the title *Kalilaj wa Dimnaj*, which seems close to the Pahlavi. The original Sanskrit, he says, was *Kranka wa Dimnaka*. See the Preface to *Kalila wa Dimna*, by Muhammad Hasan Na’il al-Marsafi, 20–30.

<sup>17</sup> See the periodical *al-Mashriq*, 14 (Beirut, 1911): 239.

<sup>18</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Dumal*, ed. Anton Salihani (Beirut, 1890), 5.

This apostle was called Thomas Didymous (twin. See the Gospel of John 11: 16) because he and his brother Addai (Thadeus), one of the Seventy, were twins.<sup>19</sup> Thomas was from Galilee. He preached first in Judea and then came to the East after sending his brother to Edessa to preach the Christian faith to the Medes and Persians.<sup>20</sup> He also preached (Christianity) to the garrison of the Persian-Magians in Takrit.<sup>21</sup> He ended his mission in India where he was first to raise the banner of the Gospel.

According to the tradition of Malabar, the Apostle Thomas preached the Gospel in 52 A. D. He first landed in the city of Kodungallor<sup>22</sup> preaching to the Jews and then to heathens. He remained in Malabar (modern Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar), three years. Because of his profound and passionate homilies, many people embraced Christianity including noble Brahmin families. He founded seven churches in seven different localities. They were Maliankara near Kodungallor,<sup>23</sup> Kollam,<sup>24</sup> Niranam, Chayal (Nilakal), Parur, Gokamangalam, and Palayur near (Kottakavil).<sup>25</sup> Four of these churches still stand while the rest cannot be traced. The church of Palayur near Kunnankulam, one of the 46 Brahmin villages then, was a pagan temple. Also it was inhabited by Jews, the ruins of whose synagogue can still be seen. In the vicinity still stands a hill called 'The Jew's Mount

The apostle arrived in Palayur where the Brahmins were celebrating their rituals at a water pool. He made a miracle by sprinkling water into the air which stood still and did not fall down. The Brahmins were marveled and believed in the God of Thomas except for the few pagan fanatics who remained in their error. Those who believed converted their temple into a church.<sup>26</sup> The apostle ordained priests from four families of Pakalomattom,

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<sup>19</sup> See the discourse of Maphryono Simon bar 'Amraya on the Apostle Thomas, quoting St. Ephraim's *madrosbo* (metrical hymn) in the tune of The Ladder of Mighty Men.

<sup>20</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1: 13.

<sup>21</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, and biography of St. Thomas.

<sup>22</sup> Cranganore. TRANS.

<sup>23</sup> Cranganore. TRANS.

<sup>24</sup> Kurakkeni Kollam (Quilon). TRANS.

<sup>25</sup> E. M. Philip, 12–13, English, 29. TRANS.

<sup>26</sup> Philip, 16–17, English, 31–32. TRANS.

Sankarapuri, Kalli and Kaliankal.<sup>27</sup> It is also said that he ordained an Indian bishop named Kepha.<sup>28</sup>

According to the apocryphal story of St. Thomas, the apostle ordained two Bishops: Bar Hadh Bshabba and Tuma (Thomas). This happened when St. Thomas was sold to Haban (Abbanes), and both of them arrived at the citadel of Sandrok where they attended the marriage of the king's daughter. The apostle converted both the bride and her groom to Christianity. It was then that he ordained the bridegroom, Bar Hadh Bshabba, a bishop. Bar Hadh Bshabba joined the apostle on his evangelization mission. So also did the bride and another flute-girl who was at the wedding.

Thereafter, the Apostle Thomas built a palace in heaven for King Gundaphoros<sup>29</sup> and his brother Gad after their conversion to Christianity. Meantime, Vizan a son of another king was also converted to the faith.<sup>30</sup> St. Thomas ordained him a bishop over all India and called him Thomas. He also ordained a priest named Sifur (Syphor). He was engaged in other acts not mentioned by the Indian history. However, several anecdotes in the story of St. Thomas contradict the Christian faith. Of these is the apostle's advising the bride and the bridegroom to renounce marriage saying, "Marriage is a contamination."<sup>31</sup> This indicates that the story was perhaps fabricated by some heretics in the third century.

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<sup>27</sup> Philip, 14. English, 29. TRANS.

<sup>28</sup> See a tractate on the *Hierarchy of Malabar* by a Catholic author.

<sup>29</sup> For the form of the name of this king I have followed *Act of the Holy Apostle Thomas* in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, translated by Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, III (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. M. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951) 535. Indian writers record this name as Gondophoros, or Gondophornes. See David Daniel, *The Orthodox Church of India*, I (New Delhi: Printaid, 1972): 7, and Curien Corepiscopa Kaniamparampil, *The Syrian Orthodox Church in India and its Apostolic Faith* (Tiruvalla, Kerala, India: National Offset Press, 1989), 3. E. M. Philip, English, 35–41 write the name as Gondophares which shall be used throughout. TRANS.

<sup>30</sup> This was King Misdus and his son was Vizan or Juzanes. See *Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas*, 550. TRANS.

<sup>31</sup> There is a reference in the story to marriage as a "filthy intercourse." See *Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas*, 537. TRANS.

## CHAPTER FOUR: KING GONDOPHARES OF INDIA

According to church history St. Thomas preached in India in the time of King Gondophares.<sup>32</sup> But who is this king, and when did he live? Some historians confirm that King Gondophares was a Parthian who lived in the first century A. D. His kingdom extended to parts of India, namely Punjab and the Indus River<sup>33</sup> and other parts of northern India. He was powerful and more famous than the seven kings who issued from his family.<sup>34</sup> In this context, Eusebius of Caesarea was correct maintaining that St. Thomas preached to the Parthian.<sup>35</sup> Nothing was known about King Gondophares until the nineteenth century. The archaeological discoveries in this century and the coins which bear his name leave no room for doubt that he existed in the first century A. D. Therefore, there is no objection to the fact that Parthia and northern India were the first countries where St. Thomas preached. Thereafter, he went to southern India to continue his apostolic mission. Nevertheless, Indian historians affirm that Gondophares is associated with southern India.

Since most of the names of the towns in southern India are those of pagan gods, we can ascertain some of them as mentioned in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*.<sup>36</sup>

According to the *Acts of Thomas*, Christ the Lord sold the apostle to Haban, a delegate of the Indian king.<sup>37</sup> Both of them sailed and landed first

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<sup>32</sup> This is mentioned in the poems of St. Ephraim and his pupil Cyrillona. St. Jacob of Sarug (d. 521) wrote four lengthy splendid odes about this historical event predicated on the story of St. Thomas. Three of these odes were published by Paul Bedjan

<sup>33</sup> *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 23: 308.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 18: 6–3.

<sup>35</sup> Eusebius says that according to tradition, Thomas received Parthia as his allotted region. See *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius of Caesarea*, translated by Christian Frederick Cruse (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Michigan), Book III, Chapter 1. TRANS.

<sup>36</sup> *The Acts of Thomas* consists of sixteen chapters in 174 pages. It was published by Paul Bedjan in Vo. 3 of *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*.

<sup>37</sup> For no appropriate reason, the author has compressed the anecdote in just a few words thus leaving the reader confused. According to the *Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas*, the Apostles were in Jerusalem. They cast a lot to determine the country where each of them would preach. India fell to Thomas but he refused to go to that country. The Savior appeared to him at night and commanded him to go to India and proclaim the truth. Still, Thomas refused to go. The Lord tried to find a way to

at the city of Sandrok. Sandrok is a Sanskrit compound name of Sandra, or Chandra (Chandran) meaning Moon, and Ouk, dwelling place, thus it means The Dwelling of the Moon. The pagan Indians believed that Chandran (Moon) is the head-dress of the god Shiyun.<sup>38</sup> This is why they claim that the Moon dwells in Shiynn. Thus, the term Sandrok means “The City of Shiyun<sup>39</sup>.” In this regard, the tradition of Malabar is correct maintaining that St Thomas the Apostle arrived by boat at the city of Kodungallor the famous port on the coast of Malabar. Hence, Kodungallor is the same as Sandrok. In fact, Kodungallor is a compound name of Kodlinga which is another name of Shiyun (Siva), and Or, city, namely the City of Shiyun (Siva). Kodungallor was the capital of a kingdom called Kandaparasu which is another name of the god Shiyun (Siva).<sup>40</sup> In this sense, the name of King Gondophares is either related to this kingdom, or derived from the Tamil, the language of Mylapore and the neighboring countries. In fact, the kings of Mylapore were called Kandaparaja. The name of Haban (Abbanes) was popular among the people of Telugu of southern India who were skillful navigators.<sup>41</sup>

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE STRIFE AND MARTYRDOM OF ST. THOMAS

After sowing the seed of the Gospel in Malabar, St. Thomas entrusted the nascent church to the clergymen he had ordained. He journeyed to the eastern coast of India and Malacca preaching Christianity. It is also said that he

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send Thomas to India. It happened that an Indian merchant named Abbanes (Haban) was sent by King Gondophares to Jerusalem to find a skilled carpenter to build a house for him. The Lord saw him and asked him whether he was looking for the right carpenter. Abbanes said yes he was looking for a carpenter. Jesus showed him Thomas standing at a distance and told Abbanes that Thomas was his slave and a carpenter and he was willing to sell him. Abbanes paid Jesus three pounds of uncoiled silver. When the sale transaction was done, Abbanes sailed with Thomas to India. He introduced him to King Gondophares as the skilled carpenter who would build him his desired palace. See *Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas I*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. M. B. Eerdmans, 1951, 535. TRANS.

<sup>38</sup> This must be Siva. TRANS.

<sup>39</sup> Siva.

<sup>40</sup> E. M. Philip, 28–30, English, 41. TRANS.

<sup>41</sup> E. M. Philips, 28–30, English, 42. In order to have a clearer picture of the whole episode of St. Thomas, the reader is referred to E. M. Philip, English, entire Chapter IV, 35–51. TRANS.

preached in China.<sup>42</sup> On December 18, 75 A. D., St. Thomas was back to Pandi. Upon reaching Mylapore near Madras, a pagan priest attacked him spearing him in the right side. They had him skinned alive on December 21,<sup>43</sup> and his immaculate soul departed to the heavenly chambers. His blessed body was buried in Mylapore.<sup>44</sup> On July 3, 394,<sup>45</sup> his remains were transferred to Edessa arriving in the city on August 22 in the time of Qura (Cyrus), bishop of Edessa.<sup>46</sup> A magnificent church was built in his name. In

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<sup>42</sup> Some say that the disciples of St. Thomas, coming from India, preached the Gospel in China. See Rev. Butrus Nasri, *Dhakhirat al-Adhban*, 2: 99. There is no doubt that St. Thomas preached to some nation called China. This is asserted by the Malabar tradition of St. Thomas stating, "Through the blessed St. Thomas the illumination of the life-giving encompassed all the Hindoos. By effort of the blessed St. Thomas the Kingdom of Heaven was opened to the Chinese." According to the records of the Church of Angamali on the Malabar Coast, it used to send a suffragan to the Island of Socotra and to China. The least that could be ascertained is that St. Thomas had visited parts of China. See Rev. John Mason Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church* (London: Rivingtons, 1873), 6, note 3. TRANS.

<sup>43</sup> On July 3, the Church commemorates the transporting of his remains to Edessa. In his calendar, Ibn Khayrun mentions two more festivities: one on September 18 and the second on October 6. The Greek Church commemorates him on October 6. Some Syrian and Latin churches in Malabar commemorate him on December 21.

<sup>44</sup> Bar Hebraeus says that St. Thomas was martyred in the city of Calamina. But there is no city of this name in India. Indeed, St Thomas was martyred on a hillock or mountain near Mylapore called today St Thomas Hill. In the Tamil, the language of Mylapore, this hill is called Chinnamala that is hillock, the equivalent of which in Syriac is Galmuna. And since the Church of India was and still is one of the dioceses of the Syrian Church, the name of Galmuna became popular among the Syrians of India, but was distorted into Calamina. According to the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat, this hillock is called Chinamalla or Chalamanalla. But the last L letter was inadvertently changed into N. For more information see Philip, English, 44–46. TRANS.

<sup>45</sup> Lately, some Malabarians tried to declare July 3 as a national holiday for the commemoration of the removal of the remains of St. Thomas to Edessa.

<sup>46</sup> *Chronica Minora*, I: 65, of an anonymous Edessan, and a historical tractate by a monk from the Monastery of Qartmin, 5. Bar Hebraeus says that the transference of St. Thomas's remains took place in the time Eulogius, predecessor of Mar Qura. See Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, I: 65. The Orientalist Rubens Duval says that according to the *Doctrine of Addai*, Thomas, Apostle of the East, sent Addai to preach the Gospel in Edessa. He further says that according to the *Passion of St. Thomas*, the remains of St. Thomas were transported to Edessa around 232. Ac-



442, The Military General Anatole had a silver sarcophagus made for the apostle's relics.<sup>47</sup>

The tomb of St. Thomas was always a site of visitation. We are told by the English historian Edward Gibbon that, in the ninth century, Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, while fighting the Dutch, made a vow for this tomb. It was carried by a delegation headed by Bishop Sighelian of Shirburn.<sup>48</sup> The thirteenth-century Venetian traveler Marco Polo says that Christian and other people made the pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore. He visited India twice in 1288 and 1292. He says, "The body of St. Thomas rests in a small town of the province of Malabar. The town's population is small and it is visited only by few merchants because of little business. It is not well known. But Christians and especially Muslims, who immensely revere St. Thomas and consider him one of their great men and even a prophet, make the pilgrimage to his shrine. The Christian pilgrims usually take earth from the place where he was martyred to heal the sick by the providence of God and the intercession of St. Thomas. That earth is red."<sup>49</sup> How splendid what Jacob of Sarug said in this context through Christ, glory be to him, who, addressing St. Thomas said,

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cording to this apocryphal tract, when the Emperor Severus Alexander (222–235) returned after his victory over the Persians, he asked the Indian king for the body of St. Thomas which was deposited in a silver coffin in Edessa. According to the tradition of St. Ephraim (d. 373), the remains of the apostle were brought by a merchant from India and deposited in Edessa. The history of Edessa, however, fixes the transporting of St. Thomas' remains to Edessa in 394 in the time of its Bishop Cyrus (Qura). See Rubens Duval, *Histoire Politique, Religieuse, et Littéraire D' Edessa* (Paris, 1892), 102. The full title is given by me. TRANS.

<sup>47</sup> *Chronica Minora*, 7.

<sup>48</sup> E. M. Philip, 34., English, 43. Alfred, king of the West Saxons (871–899), was fighting the Danes and not the Dutch. When the Danes were ravaging England, Alfred made a vow that if he drove them back he would send gifts to Rome and to India in honor of St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew. He succeeded in driving them back, and in 833 sent Sighelem or Suithelm, bishop of Shirburn, with the gifts. Sighelem arrived in Malabar, offered the gifts and brought back jewels and spices. See *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. B. Thorpe, II (1861): 66; William of Malmesbury, *de gestis regum Anglorum*, ed. W. Stubbs, I (London, 1887): 130, and Adrian Fortescue, *The Lesser-Eastern Churches* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1913), 361. TRANS.

<sup>49</sup> *The Travels of Marco Polo*, ed. Henry Yule, with notes by Cordier, 2 (1903): 290.

“On the spot where your immaculate remains rest until the Day of Resurrection, shall also rest a power for the healing of the afflicted.”

“Demons shall wail in the presence of your body as the legion wailed when I rebuked them.”

“Whatever shrine contains your remains, the multitudes will rush to it and kings will hold it with veneration.”

“If, like me, you were pierced with a lance because you loved me too much, your recompense shall be rivers of living water flowing out of your wound.”

“As a reward for sending you a slave to India, kings will be sent to your tomb with honor.”

“Your tomb shall be a bastion of strength for the mighty and the simple alike. The afflicted and the persecuted will find asylum in it.”

“Your body shall be the harbor of peace for mankind. Multitudes, the world over, shall rush to it as a token of glorifying your bones.”<sup>50</sup>

## CHAPTER SIX: THE EAST AND THE CHURCH OF INDIA

The “East” is a term covering the countries east of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire. These were mainly the lands of Arthur (northern Iraq), Arabia and Persia. The Gospel says, “The Magi came from the east.” (The Gospel of St. Matthew 2: 2.) These countries were also called the Land of the Aramaens. From this land Christianity entered India in the first few centuries after St. Thomas. At the beginning of the third century A. D., Christianity entered the island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean, and at the end of it, Socotra became an Episcopal See. Its inhabitants worshiped in the Syriac language as was said by the learned Photius in his *Library*.<sup>51</sup> In the middle of the third century, Dawud (David), bishop of Furath Mishan (modern Basra, Iraq) the most prominent of the episcopals of the East, left his seat in the latter quarter of the third century and journeyed to India to preach the message of salvation. He succeeded in converting many people to Christianity.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Vol. 3: 760

<sup>51</sup> Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, *A Compendium History of the Church*, (Homs: Matba’at al-Salama, 1940), 392–393.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, I: 292. The fifth-century historian Theodoret of Cyrus mentioned in his book *Haret, Fab. Comp*, I: 26 in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 83: 381, and Michael Rabo, *Chronicle*, 11, and others that the third-century Syrian heretic Mani, sent one of his pupils named Tuma (Thomas) to India

Christianity entered the city of Riordashir, near Bushir, at the beginning of the third century. It was once the capital of Fars, a province of Persia. In the last quarter of this century it became an Episcopal see<sup>53</sup> and then a metropolitan see. Riordashir was the first outlet of Christianity in the north-eastern part of India. Its metropolitan had jurisdiction over the land of the Qataris, Merv, Karman, Shiraz, Socotra and Inida.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the metropolitan of Fars sent Syrian suffragans to India. Cosmas Indicopleustes who visited south India around 522 A. D., says that there were Christians in the Island of Ceylon. At Calliana there was a bishop appointed from Persia. Here is his invaluable testimony. Cosmas says,

“Even in Taprobané (Ceylon), an island in Further India, where the Indian sea is, there is a church of Christians, with clergy and a body of believers, but I know not whether there be any Christians in the part beyond it. In the country called Malé (Malabar), where the pepper grows, there is also a church, and at another place called Calliana there is moreover a bishop, who is appointed from Persia. Cosmas goes on to say, “In the island, again called the island of Dioscorides (Socotra), situated in the same Indian sea, and where the inhabitants speak Greek, have been originally colonists sent thither by the Ptolemies who succeeded Alexander the Macedonian, there are clergy who receive their ordination in Persia, and are sent on to the island, and there is also a multitude of Christians.”<sup>55</sup> Although,

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to preach. When he failed he returned to Mani. Furious, Mani recanted Christianity, which he had deceitfully claimed, and enunciated his heresy which he was concealing. The Malabar writers, however, claim that Mani taught a doctrine similar to that of Buddha. One of his followers came to Malabar and propagated his heresy among the Christians of Korkinikollam. He deceived eight families of them. His followers grew to ninety-six houses. They were still called the Mani sect until this time. (*History of Angen*, Eugenius). Others are of the opinion that the people called Mani Kramakar in Malabar are Mani's followers who remained as a group in Travancore until latter time. But they began gradually to join the pagan sect of Nairs. See P. Cheriyan, *The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society* (1935), 40.

<sup>53</sup> Ignatius Aphram Barsoum, *al-Durar al-Nafisa*, 392.

<sup>54</sup> Butrus Nasri, *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, I: 148 and 2: 101.

<sup>55</sup> See Cosmas, *Universal Christian Topography*. Cosmas, surnamed Indicopleustes, or the Indian Navigator, was an Egyptian Christian traveler whose *Topography* excited the interest of scholars until this day. It was translated by John Watson McCrindle into English and with an Introduction and notes with the title of *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, An Egyptian Monk* (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society. 1897.) The previous passage is found on pp. 118–119 of the translation. The author, Patriarch Jacob III, continues the footnote saying that some maintain

according to the six-century Nestorian monk Mshiha Zkha<sup>56</sup> al-Mada'in (Seleucia-Ctesiphon) became an Episcopal see in the fourth century and a metropolitan see in the next century, and the metropolitan extended his jurisdiction to other parts of Persia, still the region of Fars did not come under his influence. Indeed, the author of *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*<sup>57</sup> admitted that the inhabitants of Qatar, the Ramanians and the inhabitants of the Hormoza island were, first associated with the metropolitan of Fars.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the bishops of Fars, Raziq, Beth Qatraya and Wayrshahr, did not figure in the arrangements made by the Saliq<sup>59</sup> Council in 410.<sup>60</sup> Bar Hebraeus maintains that the bishops of Fars (Riordashir) were not under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of Ctesiphon. They claimed to be the disciples of St. Thomas the Apostle and had no connection with the See of Mari.<sup>61</sup> Evidently, if Fars was subject to the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon nothing of that would have happened. But, since the fifth century, the Metropolitan See of Fars began to wane gradually. According to Bar Hebraeus the Nestorian Catholicos Timothy I (d. 823), added the See of Fars to his own see after granting its metropolitan some privileges.<sup>62</sup> And since the metropolitan of Fars had the Church of India under his jurisdiction, and he was not subject to the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the conclusion is that this catholicos had no authority over the

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that Cosmas was a merchant of Alexandria. He quit business and entered a monastery where he wrote down the account of his travels in Greek between 535 and 550. Others maintain that he was a Malkite because, in his book, he calls the Virgin Mary the Mother of God and uses the phrase of Two Natures of Christ. See McCrindle's Introduction, iv-x and 364–365. TRANS.

<sup>56</sup> *The History of Mishha Zkha* was edited and translated by J. B. Chabot, *Notices et Extraits des Mnauscrits* (1902), and by Alphonse Mingana, *Sources Syriaques* (1908). TRANS.

<sup>57</sup> The Chaldean Rev. Buturs Nasri. TRANS.

<sup>58</sup> *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, 2: 101.

<sup>59</sup> Seleucia. TRANS.

<sup>60</sup> Addai Scher, *Tarikh Kaldo wa Athur*, 2: 103.

<sup>61</sup> This is how the Nestorians called the See of the Catholicos after they had established their Catholicate in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Bar Hebraeus continues that they were married and ate meat. In the middle of the fifth century, Ma'na, bishop of Fars deceitfully seized the vacant Catholicate See in the middle of the fifth century much against the opposition of the bishops of that see. However, when the bishops found a proper opportunity, they ousted him from the see, and he returned to his original See of Riordashir Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2: 53–57 and 171.

<sup>62</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Ibid.*, 169–171.

Church of India even shortly after the establishment of the Nestorian Catholicate. This is confirmed by the fact that the Nestorian Catholicos Yeshu' Yab Hazaya<sup>63</sup> (650–660), addressed a letter to Simon, metropolitan of Fars in the middle of the seventh century saying that, “India which extends from the limits of the Persian Kingdom to Kollam, is in darkness because it did not receive the light of divine teaching which could only be obtained through the medium of the priests of Truth.”<sup>64</sup>

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE SEE OF ANTIOCH AND THE CHURCH OF INDIA

The See of Antioch had jurisdiction over all the Christian East with its different ethnic peoples. In like manner, the See of Alexandria had jurisdiction over Africa and the Roman See over the West.<sup>65</sup> In other words, the See of Antioch had authority over all Asia.<sup>66</sup> This was confirmed by the Sixth Canon of the Council of Nicaea in 325 and the Second Canon of the Council of Constantinople in 381.<sup>67</sup> Mar Michael Rabo, when discussing the countries under the jurisdiction of the Four Sees of Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople, says, “Let the ancient usage prevail that the Sees of Rome and Constantinople should have jurisdiction over one of the three regions of the world which covers Europe west of the Western Sea known as Adria (the Mediterranean). The See of Alexandria should have jurisdiction over Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya to the south of that sea. As to greater Asia whose boundaries extend from the shores of that said sea to the utmost parts of the East and whose area approximates that of the former two regions, should be under the jurisdiction of the See of Antioch.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Hazaya is the modern city of Arbil in Iraq. TRANS.

<sup>64</sup> See Vatican MS 157, 105; Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 3: 131 and E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 115.

<sup>65</sup> Nasri, *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, I: 44, 49, and 73–74.

<sup>66</sup> John Mason Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church*, 1.

<sup>67</sup> Jacob of Edessa, *Collection of the Canons of Councils*, and Gieseler, I: 424–426. The full title of this work is J. C. I. Gieseler, *Text-Book of Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Francis Cunningham, I (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blannchard, 1836): 424–426. TRANS.

<sup>68</sup> Michael Rabo, *Chronique de Michel Le Syrien*, (Syriac), ed. J. B. Chabot, 1V (Paris, 1910, reprinted Bruxelles: Culture et Civilization, 1963): 411, and the Arabic translation by Metropolitan Saliba Shimon with the title *Tarikh Mar Mikha'il al-Suryani al-Kabir Batrainch Antakiya*, 2 (Aleppo: Dar Mardin, 1996): 307. TRANS.

The See of Antioch had jurisdiction over twelve metropolitan and one hundred thirty-seven episcopal sees.<sup>69</sup> In the ninth and tenth centuries the See of Antioch had jurisdiction over twenty metropolitan and one hundred and three Episcopal sees.<sup>70</sup> Thus, it had authority over the bishops of Syria, Phoenicia, the Arab countries, Palestine, Cilicia, Cyprus, Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia), Persia and India.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, the Orthodox Church in the time of the Abbasid caliphs extended from China to Cyprus and Jerusalem.<sup>72</sup> And since the Indian church, headed by the Apostolic See of Antioch was in the eastern region of this see, it was natural that it came under its authority. This was affirmed by the historians already mentioned.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, I: 154, "Antioch's authority extended beyond the limits of the Roman Empire that is Kando and India. It also seems that the missionaries of Antioch preached Christianity on the confines of China." John Mosheim says, "The patriarchate of Antioch, embraced, originally, the whole diocese of the East, and likewise extended over the churches beyond the limits of the Roman Empire in Asia, quite to India."<sup>73</sup> In his article about the Patriarchal sees written in 143, the historian Nilus Doxa Petrius said, "The Syrian Patriarch of Antioch has authority over India and that such authority extends to Asia, the Eastern countries and the Indian islands."<sup>74</sup>

Dr. Claudius Buchanan,<sup>75</sup> who visited the church of Malabar at the beginning of the nineteenth century, relates the following dialogue between the Syrians of India and the Portuguese. The Portuguese said, "These

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<sup>69</sup> This was established by the account ascribed to the Malkite (Chalcedonian) Patriarch Anastasius whose original text, written in the Estrangelo Syriac script. It was found in the village of Basibrina in Tur 'Abdin. It dates back to the middle of the ninth century. Its copy is preserved at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>70</sup> John Mason Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church*, I: 153. I have been unable to find the reference in this book. TRANS.

<sup>71</sup> Ignatius Ephrem Rahmani (Syrian Catholic Patriarch), *al-Mababith al-Jaliyya fi al-Liturgiyyat al-Sharqiyya wa al-Gharbiyya*, with the French title *Les Liturgies Orientales et Occidentales* (Sharfa: al-Matba'a al-Patriarchiyya al-Suryaniyya, 1924), 28 and James Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, I: 84.

<sup>72</sup> Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, 1: 116.

<sup>73</sup> Mosheim, I: 232–234. This passage is not by Mosheim but by the translator James Murdock. It is contained in a lengthy footnote 2 which extends from p. 233 to p. 234 of Vol. I. The passage is on p. 234. TRANS.

<sup>74</sup> Paoli (Paolino Bartolomeo) *A Voyage to the East Indies* (London, 800), 25 and 94, and Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 3: 616.

<sup>75</sup> 1766–1815. TRANS.

churches belong to the pope.” The Syrians asked, “And who is the pope? We have not heard of him.” The Portuguese were surprised when they learned that these Christians who were converts from paganism were still using the rite and teachings of an orderly Episcopal church, and that they had metropolitans who, for the last 1300 years, were sent without interruption by the Patriarch of Antioch. The Syrians rejoined, “Whatever your faith may be, we are true Christians. We have come from the place where the Disciples of Christ were first called Christians.”<sup>76</sup>

## CHAPTER EIGHT: THE METROPOLITAN OF HERAT AND THE CHURCH OF INDIA

The precipitous Nestorian storm engulfed Persia shaking down the fallen leaves of the orthodox tree. It set fire in the peaceful chambers whose victims were the believers. The founders of the Nestorian sect waged ferocious persecution against the Orthodox Church in the East capturing most of its centers. In a short while, however, the light of orthodoxy began to shine once more not only in Persia but in the entire East. Many dioceses were established in the Arab countries, Athur, Persia, and Afghanistan in the time of Mar Marutha of Takrit (628–649). Other dioceses were added unto it including Abdaqun Wafra<sup>77</sup> and Gurgan. Indeed, the Island of Socotra was an orthodox diocese.<sup>78</sup>

The Catholicos of al-Mada’in (Seleucia-Ctesiphone) had no power over the dioceses of Persia and India, as said earlier. Likewise, the Metropolitan of Takrit had no power over these dioceses. It is clear from the letter of Patriarch Athanasius I Gammala (d. 631) to the monks of St Matthew’s Monastery, that the patriarch granted the maphryono authority only over Arthur (northern Iraq), Persia and Arabia.<sup>79</sup> Bar Hebraeus mentions the names of the twelve dioceses of the East<sup>80</sup> arranged by the Council of St.

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<sup>76</sup> Claudius Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*, 147. Buchanan visited India for the first time in 1806. His book *Christian Researches* was published by Cambridge in 1811. He passed away in 1815. TRANS.

<sup>77</sup> Wafra is in Khurasan. Eighteen metropolitans and episcopi came from it. The first was Paul X, one of the bishops of Patriarch Quryaqos around 800. The other was Basilius from the Hani Monastery who is the sixteenth of the metropolitans of Patriarch Yuhanna VIII around 1050.

<sup>78</sup> *The Travels of Marco Polo*, ed. Henry Yule, 2: 343 and John Mason Neale, *The Patriarchate of Alexandria*, 2, 151.

<sup>79</sup> Micahael Rabo, *Chronicle*, (Syriac), VI: 411–413.

<sup>80</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2: 123.

Matthew's Monastery shortly after the ordination of Mar Marutha of Takrit in November, 628.<sup>81</sup> They also contain the names of three dioceses added later by Marutha himself which do not contain the diocese of India.<sup>82</sup> This, without doubt, shows that the diocese of India was not under the jurisdiction of the maphryono.

Other matters indicate that the diocese of India was not among the dioceses under the authority of the Maphryono of Takrit. The language is one of them. When Patriarch Athanasius Bar Qatra wanted to ordain Ignatius Li'azar (1143–1164) a maphryono of Takrit, Ignatius Li'azar said to him, "How do you expect to send me to a people who understand no language but Arabic?" The patriarch said, "The late Maphryono Dionysius (1112–1142) went to Takrit although he knew no Arabic. He resided in the city for thirty years before he grasped some knowledge of that language."<sup>83</sup> Now if the church of India was subject to the maphryono, there was no need for the patriarch's words. Moreover, when Bar Hebraeus compared between the Maphryono of Takrit and the metropolitans whom the Patriarch of Alexandria delegated from time to time to Ethiopia, he said, "The language of the maphryono and his flock are one." Certainly, if the church of India was a diocese of the maphryono, Bar Hebraeus would have not made such a statement.

We have seen that the metropolitan of Persia also headed the church of India. But since this metropolitan embraced the Nestorian heresy, the church of India had no more shepherds because it rejected this heresy. We have already seen that the Nestorian Catholicos Yesu' Yab I of Hazza, writes to Simon, metropolitan of Persia in the middle of the seventh century saying that, "India which extends from the limits of the Persian Kingdom to Kollam is in darkness because it did not receive the divine teaching which could only be obtained through the medium of the archpriests of Truth."<sup>84</sup> However, the Nestorians tried to extend their authority to the church of India but failed because this church refused to accept anything but orthodoxy. Shortly afterwards, they tried to assume an appearance of orthodoxy in order to control that church in the name of the See of Antioch as shall be seen later.

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<sup>81</sup> See the canons of this council in a unique manuscript copy dated 1201 at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>82</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2: 335.

<sup>84</sup> See above, p. 11.



Trustworthy scholars favor the idea that the metropolitan of Herat replaced the metropolitan of Persia in managing the church of India when he embraced Nestorianism. He also administered the diocese of Herat in Afghanistan established by Mar Marutha, maphryono of Takrit in the middle of the seventh century.<sup>85</sup> In the ninth century this diocese was added to the patriarch's private diocese. Since that time it was administered by fourteen metropolitans and bishops. The first was Ibrahim, the fifty-fourth of Patriarch Dionysius Tell Mahre's (818–845) bishops, and the last was Yuhanna, the twenty-first bishop of the Patriarch Dionysius Yahya (1034–1044), who came from the Monastery of Bar Jaji. He was ordained a bishop in 1036. For this reason the twelfth-century Dionysius Bar Salibi (d 1172) testifies that the belief of the Syrian church of India was the same as our belief we the Syrians.<sup>86</sup>

## CHAPTER NINE: THE NESTORIAN SECT AND THE CHURCH OF INDIA

In the previous chapter we said that the metropolitan of Herat administered the church of India after the metropolitan of Persia fell into the Nestorian heresy. And since the continuity of the metropolitans of Herat ceased in the middle of the eleventh century when the authority of the See of Antioch had waned because of calamities, it is no wonder that the Nestorian heresy penetrated the Syrian church of India. Indeed, it was waiting for a long time for the right opportunity to take action. However, we do not deny the introduction of Nestorianism to India before this date, as we learn from the council convened by the Nestorian Catholicos Theodosius in the middle of the ninth century. The council may have been convened through the medium of the metropolitan of Persia, who had also headed the church of India and whom the Catholicos Timothy I, brought under his authority at the beginning of this century, as said earlier. We have also seen that the fifteenth Nestorian metropolitan of Persia is listed in the roster of Nestorian metropolitans by 'Amr of Tirhan in the fourteenth century. It is likely that this episcopate was temporary,<sup>87</sup> or did not exist in the time of 'Amr of Tir-

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<sup>85</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2: 125–127.

<sup>86</sup> See Dionysius Bar Salibi, *Ten Chapters*. Chapter Two is on the signing of the Cross, and Chapter Ten on the Trisagion.

<sup>87</sup> Some writers mention that a metropolitan called Yuhanna was delegated to India by the Nestorian Catholicos in 1129, and made his seat in Kodungallor. Most likely, he was not succeeded by other metropolitans.

han. In 1321, the Latin friar Odorick passed by the coast of Malabar and landed in Kollam. He mentioned that he found in that region a substantial number of Christians. But in Mylapore he found only fifteen Nestorian families.<sup>88</sup> This is no doubt a proof that there were no Nestorians in Malabar. Otherwise, Odorick would have mentioned them as he mentioned those in Mylapore. In 1909, the Chaldean Chorepiscopus Butrus 'Aziz published a chronology of the Nestorian dioceses. Although this chronology is fabricated, 'Aziz never thought of contriving a Nestorian diocese in the Malabar of India. Yet, he mentioned a diocese in northern India, also fabrication, because no one has ever mentioned that north India was Christian in the Middle Ages.<sup>89</sup> In fact, the church of India was not yet affected by the Nestorian heresy, nor was pleased with it. Certainly, the penetration of the Nestorians into India does not mean that they were all over the county but only in part of it.

The church of India remained in this condition until 1490. In this year, it did send a delegation of three faithful men to Syria. One of them died on the way, and the other two, Yusuf and Gurgis, reached the Nestorian Catholicos Simon III known as Basidi, who was delighted to see them. At their request, he ordained two bishops, Tuma and Yuhanna, from the monks of the Monastery of Mar Awgen (Eugenius), and the group returned to Malabar. But since, for a long time the church had no bishop, Tuma and Yuhanna ordained priests and consecrated churches. Bishop Yuhanna remained in Malabar while Tuma and Yusuf returned carrying gifts for the Catholicos. In 1493, Yusuf returned alone to Malabar.<sup>90</sup> In his letter dated 1503, the Portuguese Governor Domonise mentioned the Bishops Mar Dena (Denha), Jacob and Tuma, who were likely Nestorians.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Odorick, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, I: 73–81.

<sup>89</sup> This proves that there was no Nestorian diocese in Malabar.

<sup>90</sup> The author of *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, (Rev. Butrus Nasri), fabricated a great deal of the chronicles of India to support the presidency of the Nestorian Catholicos over the church of India. But, in p. 93 of Vol 2, he admitted that, "nothing after the tenth century is known about the chronology of the Eastern bishops in India. However, some of its vestiges appeared at the end of the fifteenth century." More correctly, is that the Nestorian catholicoses were totally ignorant of the church of Malaba because it was not under their authority.

<sup>91</sup> Tractate by the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat in manuscript form, and the *History of Angen*..

### **A Roster of the Nestorian Bishops in India**

1. Sapur (825)
2. Aphrahat (825)
3. Yuhanna I (988)
4. Tuma (Thomas) I (1056)
5. Jacob I (1122)
6. Yusuf I (1231)
7. Dawud (David) (1285)
8. Jacob II (1301)<sup>92</sup>
9. Yab Alaha I (1407)
10. Tuma II (1490)
11. Yuhanna II (1490–1504)
12. Yab Alaha II (1502)
13. Denha (1502)
14. Jacob III (1502–1549)
15. Yusuf II (1555–1557)
16. Ibrahim of 'Ain Kawa (1558–1579)
17. Shin'un, Simon, (1579–1599)
18. Gabriel of 'Ain Kawa (1708–1731)
19. 'Abd Yeshu, Abdisho (1863)
20. Timothy Abimalik (1909–1945)

### **CHAPTER TEN: ROME AND THE CHURCH OF INDIA**

Rome<sup>93</sup> knew nothing about the Indian church before the thirteenth century. At the end of this century the Franciscan monk, John de Monte Corvino, who was delegated by Pope Nicolas IV (1288–1294) to China, passed by India on his way to China. He spent a few months in the southern parts of India. He wrote to Europe<sup>94</sup> that he found a church there in the name of St. Thomas and baptized about a hundred Indians.

In 1319, four Dominican missionaries came to India. All of them perished<sup>95</sup> except Jordanus who returned home after converting and baptizing many Indians. He also explored the condition of the country. In the previous chapter we have already said that Friar Odorick passed by the coast of

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<sup>92</sup> Vatican MS 29.

<sup>93</sup> The Roman Catholic Church. TRANS.

<sup>94</sup> He must have written to the pope. TRANS

<sup>95</sup> They were killed by Muhammadans. See E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 91. TRANS.

Malabar in 1321 and touched at Kollam.<sup>96</sup> He found over there a great number of Christians and fifteen Nestorian families in Mylapore.

In 1330, Jordanus returned to India as a bishop of Kollam. He carried a proclamation from the pope inviting the Syrian Indians to embrace the doctrine of Rome. In his book called *Merabilia* he says, "In this region of India (the region extending from Karachi to northern Malabar), is found people scattered all over. They claim to be Christians but have not received the grace of baptism or knowledge of the true faith. They believe the Apostle Thomas to be Christ."<sup>97</sup> Jordanus further says that he converted and baptized three hundred heathens. However, his mission was not permanently established because no missionaries followed to continue his work.

What proves that Rome was ignorant of the condition of the Christians of India is the letter of Pope Eugenius IV in 1439, carried by missionaries to India, addressed to "Our beloved Thomas, Emperor of India, who deserves praise." It is certain that there was no emperor of India by this name. Perhaps what motivated the pope to write such a thing is the rumor that there was a Christian king in India. However, those who carried the pope's message did not reach India.

It is said that an English traveler called Ludovico passed by the coast of Malabar in 1505. He wrote an account including some church chronicles which agree with the information presented by Yusuf of Malabar as previously said.

When the Portuguese colonized India in the sixteenth century,<sup>98</sup> Latin friars came to India and propagated their faith in many ways as shall be seen later. Most notable of them is the Jesuit Francis Xavier called "The Apostle of India" who came to this country in 1541. He first arrived in Goa, capital of the Portuguese colony, and then made his way to Malabar.

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<sup>96</sup> Quilon. TRANS.

<sup>97</sup> E. M. Philip, 91. TRANS.

<sup>98</sup> Sixteenth century. TRANS.



## PART TWO: THE CONDITION OF THE INDIAN CHURCH UNTIL THE DEPARTURE OF THE PORTUGUESE FROM INDIA IN 1663

### CHAPTER ONE: THE SYRIAN EMIGRANTS OF EDESSA

By the middle of the fourth century Christianity in Malabar almost faded away.<sup>99</sup> But it was revived by Syrian emigrants from Edessa headed by Joseph, a venerable Edessan bishop, and a distinguished merchant called Tuma (Thomas) the Canaanite or Jerusalemite.<sup>100</sup>

Tuma was a prominent notable who carried out business with India. It is also reported that when he once journeyed to the coast of Malabar, he saw people adorning their chests with crosses. He thought they were Christians and began conversing with them. He learned that they were in a dire need for priests. It is probable that the second persecution of Christians waged by Persian King Shapur II and that lasted for forty years (339–379), had distracted the Metropolitan of Persia from looking after them. Upon returning to his homeland Joseph spread the news about India.

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<sup>99</sup> Some say that the remnants of the Christians of the Apostle Thomas numbered 46 tribes in the middle of the fourth century.

<sup>100</sup> There is no credibility to the claim of Butrus Nasri in his *Dhakhrat al-Adhan*, 1: 364, and Rev. Sulayman Sa'igh in his novel *Yazdandokht*, 317, that these emigrants were Babylonians, that is, from the country of Athur and Babylon (Iraq). They immigrated by order of the Persian King Shapur II to India. This claim is an invalid Nestorian tradition. The historians of Malabar assert that the emigrants were from the region of Edessa. Furthermore, there is no truth to the statement of the author of *Yazdandokht*, 314–317, that Bishop Joseph was ordained by the Catholicos Bar B'ashmin in 343. Joseph was an Edessan subject of the Patriarch of Antioch and not Bar B'ashmin. The historians of Malabar, and even Butrus Nasri in his *Dhakhrat al-Adhan*, 1: 364, state that Joseph was delegated with the Edessan emigrants to India by the patriarch.

Shortly, however, he returned to India in the company of the emigrants.<sup>101</sup> Rev. Philip Edavazhikal mentioned that the merchant Tuma came to India first in 339 and traveled through Malabar, Mylapore, Chenum, Bengal and Mankom.<sup>102</sup>

The emigrants numbered 400 souls belonging to seven clans and 72 families. Among them were priests and deacons. They landed in the city of Kodungallor near Cochin around the year 345 in the time of Cheraman Perumal, king of Kondungallor (341–378).<sup>103</sup> The king received them with alacrity in order to revive business in his country. On February 29, 345, the king granted them seventy-two exclusive privileges which enhanced the position of the Christians and raised them to the status of the Hindu caste. These privileges were inscribed on a copper tablet in the name of Tuma who also received great social privileges with slaves and land in Kodungallor. Unfortunately, the original of this precious relic is lost but has survived in many copies owned by ancient families of Malabar. It is said that the tablets were still intact until the Portuguese occupied Malabar. They were handed to them and then they were lost. When the British controlled Cochin, they searched for the tablets and found some of them. They handed them over to the Syrian metropolitan. The tablet containing the privileges granted Tuma was never found until this day.<sup>104</sup>

The small Christian community of Malabar welcomed the emigrants with joy but did not intermarry with them. The emigrants lived in the

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<sup>101</sup> There is no credibility to what Sa'igh said in *Yazdasndokbt*, 213–314, that “Tuma’s mission was to convey to the Catholicos of the East the need of India for a metropolitan and clergymen and promised to carry the reply of the catholicos back to his own people.” The question is where was this catholicos in the first half of the fourth century in order that the Christians of India would appeal to him to provide them with a metropolitan and clergymen? If the Metropolitan of Persia was administering the church of India on behalf of the catholicos as the narrative says, would it not be more appropriate that this metropolitan should respond to the needs of the church of India since he was closer to it than the catholicos? Furthermore, if the perils of travel and the persecution in Persia prevented the metropolitan to supervise the affairs of the Christians of India, why should the Syrians of India appeal to the catholicos for help, who was in the midst of the fire of persecution much more than the Metropolitan of Persia. Or, this so-called catholicos did not even exist in the fourth century?

<sup>102</sup> For more on Tuma see E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, Chapter VIII, pp. 67–70. TRANS.

<sup>103</sup> For this king see Day, *Land of Perumal*, 43.

<sup>104</sup> E. M. Philip, pp. 67–70.

southern part of Kodungallor (Mahadyor) and were called “southerners” while the natives lived in the north and were called “northerners.” Until this day, these appellations and other social traditions distinguish the two groups.

The emigrants’ community grew and spread throughout Malabar to the point that a diocese was established called the Canaanites Diocese, as shall be seen later.<sup>105</sup> Rev. Philip mentioned that they built houses to the north of the king’s temple of idols. They also built a church. They assisted the king in his warfare with other Indian kings. When he triumphed, he conferred upon their men the title of Mahapillimar (nobles) and their women, Pilpillimar “noble women.”

This community exerted considerable effort to spread Christianity in India. In 394, they had the relics of St. Thomas transported from India to Edessa in the time of Qura, its metropolitan. In sum, the coming of this community of emigrants from Edessa to India impacted the history of the church of Malabar and yielded profitable results. First, it enhanced the social status of the Christians in that country. Second, it consolidated the relations between the church of Malabar and the Apostolic See of Antioch. Third, since that date the Christians of India were called Syrians and their church The Syrian Church. Rev. Philip continues to say that members of this community spread into Chenam, Bengal and other parts of India to evangelize the heathens. Tuma died in Bengal.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE IRAQI SYRIAN COMMUNITY

The learned Photius of Constantinople mentioned that in 354, the Emperor Constantius<sup>106</sup> dispatched a delegation headed by Theophilus the Indian to Saba’, Ethiopia and the Island of Ceylon. In the Island of Socotra and the coast of Hindustan, Theophilus saw some Amonoeans (Eunimians) and Arians,<sup>107</sup> and that the natives of Socotra were praying in Syriac.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> In the history of Malabar the Canaanites were called “the southerners. But after Patriarch Peter IV visited Malabar in the second half of the nineteenth century, they called themselves Canaanites.

<sup>106</sup> Constantius II 337–361. TRANS.

<sup>107</sup> Arius was born in Libya in 256 A. D. He studied in Alexandria and was ordained a deacon and then a priest. He is known for Arianism, a heresy which bears his name. Arius taught that God, meaning God the Father, was unique, transcendent, self-existent. He is alone, eternal and ingenerate. In this sense, God the Father cannot be shared or communicated. In other words, He cannot have a partner.



According to the history and tradition of Malabar, a group of Iraqi Nestorians immigrated to India around 825. They were headed by two bishops: Sapur and Aphrahat and a merchant named Sabar Yeshu'. They lived in Kollam.<sup>109</sup> The King of Kollam, Sthanu Ravi Gupta, permitted them to build a Thrista, an orthodox church in Kurakkeni Kollam. He also conferred upon them some privileges including social ranks, authority over some pagan caste, an estate and tax exemption. He authorized the officers of their church to administer civil and penal cases in their province. The privileges, written in Malayalam and Tamil, covered seven pages except two written in Pahlavi and Arabic.<sup>110</sup>

The emigrants intermarried with the Malabarian Syrians and together proceeded to revive the Gospel in India with the result that Christianity grew and flourished. By the tenth century, the Christians who enjoyed full freedom, rejected their pagan king and installed a king of their own from

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Here Arius sounds as a proto-Muhammad of Islam. Arius's main problem, however, was how to deal with Christ, the Son of God and his relation to the Father. Following his former premise, Arius used his favorite phrase, "There was a time when the Son was not." By this he meant that as a Son, He was not eternal and that God the Father created him and brought him into existence. Thus, the Son is a mere creature whom God the Father has formed out of nothing. In other words, as a creature, the Son must have a beginning. This is why according to Arius the created Son cannot comprehend the infinite and ineffable God. Although Arius and his heresy were condemned by the Council of Nicaea in 325 A. D., by the middle of this century this heresy was promoted by radical Arians mostly Aetius and Eunomius, known as Anomoeism. They affirmed the system of Arius but added some ideas of their own. They maintained that since the Father designated the activity by which the Son was created, the Son, in turn, brought into existence the Holy Spirit, and subordinate to Him the whole creation. Unlike the Arians, the Anomoeans admit that since the Son possesses creative power, He, likewise, possesses a relative divinity. In sum, both Arians and Anomoeans reached the conclusion that Christ was a demigod, thus falling into the blasphemy of polytheism. Their heresy has been regenerated in modern times by Jehovah Witnesses. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, revised edition (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 226–231 and 249–251. TRANS.

<sup>108</sup> *Al-Durar al-Nafisa*. The reference here is to Patriarch Aphram Barsoum, *al-Durar al-Nafis fi Tarikh al-Kanisa* (Matba'at al-Salama: Homs, 1940), 393, TRANS.

<sup>109</sup> The Catholic writer Placid, who is known to the Malabarians, says in his book *Tarikh al-Kanisa al-Hindiyya*, that these two bishops were sent by the Maphryono of Takrit.

<sup>110</sup> Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 84.

the Syrian family of Villiarvattom from the city of Udayamperor where he placed his throne. As there were no more heirs to this throne, this small kingdom became subject of the king of Cochin. But the Syrians kept preserving the scepter of their king with esteem until the Portuguese came to India in the sixteenth century. They offered it to them as shall be seen shortly.<sup>111</sup>

### CHAPTER THREE: THE NESTORIANS PENETRATE THE INDIAN CHURCH IN THE NAME OF THE SEE OF ANTIOCH

In 1502, the Nestorian Catholicos Iliyya (Elijah) V, dispatched the above-mentioned Bishop Tuma with three other Bishops: Dawud (Yab Alaha), Denha and Yaqub from the Monastery of Mar Awgen. Bishop Yuhanna was then still living. In 1504, they reported to the catholicos the following: "Those associated with our faith here are estimated at thirty thousand souls. They pray for your good health. They are now engaged in building more churches. Praise God, every thing here is plentiful and the people are quiet and love peace. The Church of St. Thomas has regained its glory through the Christians who live in Mylapore, a twenty days distance, on the sea coast and in Ceylon. There are twenty towns in this province called Malabar where Christians live. Most famous of these are Kondungallor,<sup>112</sup> Palur and Kollam. There are other cities almost equal to these. In all these towns are found Christian churches and houses. Nearby, there is a big and rich city called Coriciot (Calicut) inhabited by heathens.<sup>113</sup> The city of Angamali was the seat of metropolitans. According to some Malabarian writers these metropolitans built fifty-six churches in Malabar whereas there were only seven in the past."<sup>114</sup>

Upon leaving Malabar, the previously mentioned Yusuf (Joseph) journeyed to Europe in the company of the Portuguese governor Pedro Alvarez Cabral.<sup>115</sup> He visited Lisbon, Rome, Venice and other cities. In 1507, a book

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<sup>111</sup> Philip, 85. Philip Says that in his *Commentary on the Eucharist*, Bar Salibi mentioned orthodox kings in India.

<sup>112</sup> The Indian Syrian Priest Curien calls it Cranganofre. See Curien corepiscopa Kanaiamprampil, *The Syrian Orthodox Church in India and Its Apostolic Faith* (Kerala: National Offset Press, 1989), 49. TRANS.

<sup>113</sup> Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 3: 587, 589.

<sup>114</sup> Rev. Philip Idodikal, *History of the Church of Malabar*.

<sup>115</sup> General Pedro Alvarez Cabral (1467–1520), a Portuguese navigator. He was friend of Vasco da Gama and Bartolomeum Dias. In 1500, he was sent by King Immanuel at the head of a fleet to India. TRANS.

entitled *Travels of Joseph the Indian*<sup>116</sup> was published in Europe containing information derived personally from Joseph himself.

What should concern us most, however, is whether the church of Malabar received these metropolitans just because they were Nestorians. We have already said that when the Nestorians could not control the church of Malabar under the guise of Nestorianism, they used the name of the See of Antioch as a stratagem to deceive and control this church. And this is exactly what happened.

The Nestorians penetrated the church of Malabar in the name of the See of Antioch, as the above mentioned Joseph said in his book. In fact, when Pope Alexander VI asked him, "By what authority does the Nestorian patriarch administer Malabar?" Joseph answered, "The Apostle Peter first administered the Church of Antioch. But when the evil heresy of Simon Magus spread in the Church of Rome, Peter went to Rome to defeat Simon and help the distressed Christians. Before he left, however, he appointed a deputy. The present patriarch is his successor." By this means, the Nestorian catholicos extended his authority over the church of India for a time.

Joseph's words remained firm in the minds of the Malabarians until the arrival of orthodox metropolitans to Malabar for the second time. We read in a Syriac manuscript that the Malabarian Abraham, priest of the Church of Angamali, wrote in 1702, to Paul, priest of Parur that, "The Catholicos of the East is the same Patriarch of Antioch whose authority extends from Antioch to the farthest end of the East."

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE PORTUGUESE IN INDIA

The Portuguese were the first Ifranj (Franks)<sup>117</sup> to colonize India as a result of the discovery of America by Columbus and the voyages of Spanish and Portuguese navigators. This motivated King Manuel I to marshal a big fleet in 1489 to explore India headed by Vasco da Gama who was known for seafaring skill. Sailing from Lisbon, da Gama finally rounded the Cape of Good Hope which he also discovered. Capturing Malindi,<sup>118</sup> he found in it Indian merchants. He took some of them to show him the route to India.

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<sup>116</sup> *Novus Orbis*. See Curien, 51. TRANS.

<sup>117</sup> Since the Crusades' time the term Ifranj (Franks) was used by Muslim-Arab writers for Europeans. It is still used by some Middle Eastern writer today. TRANS.

<sup>118</sup> A city in east Kenya on the Indian Ocean. TRANS.

In 1498, he arrived at Calicut on the coast of Malabar. Its King Samudri<sup>119</sup> would not let him establish a merchant colony in it. After remaining in India for some time and exploring its conditions, da Gama returned to Portugal reaching it in September, 1499.

Shortly after da Gama's arrival in Portugal, Pedro Alvarez Cabral, the discoverer of Brazil, led a fleet of thirteen ships to India. Arriving at Calicut, he founded a Portuguese merchant colony. Before returning home he left in it some Portuguese. In 1500, the governor of Calicut issued an order killing all of them. The Portuguese government responded by dispatching a fleet of ten ships commanded by da Gama. He was granted the title of "Emperor of India." He sailed from Portugal at the beginning of 1502, and upon reaching Calicut, he stormed it with cannons. Upon landing, he attacked its inhabitants ferociously and departed to Cochin. He was visited by a Syrian delegation who offered him the scepter of their king. They appealed to him to save them from the tyranny of their non-Christian enemies. In turn, da Gama presented them with gifts and promised to rescue them from their enemies' oppression. After signing merchant treaties with King Konjura-men of Calicut and with other cities on the coast, he returned to Lisbon in September, 1503.

In this year (1503), King Samudri (Zamorin), for mere revenge, declared war on the king of Cochin for signing treaties with the Portuguese. His troops entered Kodungallor destroying and pillaging. The Christians fled and scattered. He captured Cochin whose king and the Portuguese in it sought asylum in the citadel of Palliborum. A year later, six Portuguese ships arrived in the port of Cochin and expelled Samudri. The king of Cochin offered the Portuguese a piece of land on which they built a citadel calling it "Immanuel's Citadel." In it they built a church, a monastery and a seminary. They also recruited a Latin metropolitan to instruct the Syrians.<sup>120</sup> Having expanded their conquest to parts of India, the Portuguese made Goa a capital of their colony. Later, however, they suffered disorder which impelled King John III, who succeeded Manuel, to summon Vasco da Gama and name him his Viceroy of India. Da Gama, then 64 years old, sailed from Lisbon in April, 1524 to receive his new position. He arrived in Goa.

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<sup>119</sup> Curien writes the name of this king as Zamorin. See Curien, *Ibid.*, 51. TRANS.

<sup>120</sup> The metropolitan was to instruct and convert the Syrians into the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. TRANS.

While taking care of some matters in Cochin, he was attacked by fever and died on Christmas Eve, 1524.

Having no knowledge whatever about Westerners, the Syrian church of India was surprised to know that the Portuguese were valiant Christian people. On their part, the Portuguese were surprised to learn that those Christians who had been once pagans still performed the rituals and teachings of an orderly Episcopal church. They also learned that the Indians received, without interruption, metropolitans from the Patriarch of Antioch. Dr. Claudius Buchanan, who visited the Church of Malabar at the beginning of the nineteenth century,<sup>121</sup> mentioned this matter in the dialogue he recorded between the Indians and the Portuguese concerning the faith and hierarchy of the church. When the Portuguese learned that these Indian Syrians had more than a hundred churches in Malabar, they told them that these churches belonged to the pope. The Indians said, "And who is the pope? We have not heard of him." They went on saying, "Whatever your faith may be, and we are true Christians, we have come from the place where the Apostles of Christ were first called Christians."<sup>122</sup> No doubt, this dialogue confirms what the previously mentioned Joseph of Malabar has said.

At the beginning, the Syrians and the Portuguese treated each other with respect and affection. The Portuguese attended the Syrians' religious ceremonies as stated by the letter addressed by the Nestorian bishops to their Catholicos Iliyya (Elijah) V in 1504 or 1505. But when the Portuguese established foot in India, they proceeded to sow the seed of their Roman faith in the Indian soil.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE NESTORIAN SCHISM

The Nestorian Catholicos Simon III, Basidi (1480–1502), issued a decree that no one but a member of his own family should become a catholicos. Since then, the catholicoses were raised to this position by heredity until 1551. Upon the death of Catholicos Simon V (1525–1551), he was succeeded by Simon VI Bar Mama who was the only metropolitan left in that family. He was challenged by the three bishops of Arbil, Salmas and Azerbayjan together with a group of priests, monks and notables. They embraced the Roman faith as an act of revenge. They chose a monk, Sulaqa<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> About 1806. TRANS.

<sup>122</sup> Claudius Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*, 147.

<sup>123</sup> A Syriac term meaning ascension. TRANS.

of the Ballo family of 'Aqra, and sent him to Rome. Pope Julius III ordained him a catholicos in April, 1553. Upon his return to the East, he was accompanied by the Dominican Ambrosius de Monete Celli, bishop of Arene, and the priest Anton. Both these men had knowledge of the Syriac language. Sulaqa arrived at Amid<sup>124</sup> on November 12, 1552 where he established a center of activity. With Sulaqa begins the present Chaldean denomination and catholicate. However, Sulaqa's group did not remain faithful to the authority of Rome. For this reason, the pope reordained Metropolitan Ibrahim who was already ordained by the Catholicos 'Abd Yeshu' for Malabar. The Pope did this because Roman Catholic theologians doubted the legitimacy of Abraham's ordination.<sup>125</sup> As to Yab Alaha (1567–1580), the third Chaldean Catholicos, he never thought of obtaining the pallium of confirmation from the pope like his two predecessors.<sup>126</sup> The reason is that the Chaldeans did not join Rome because of genuine belief, but for sheer dissension.

Pope Julius III granted Sulaqa absolute authority over all the East, India and China.<sup>127</sup> When Sulaqa was murdered in 1555, he was succeeded by Yeshu' who was confirmed by Pope Pius IV in 1562. In a private proclamation, the pope urged him to send bishops and clergymen to Malabar. Also, he entreated the Portuguese government in India to extend assistance to him.<sup>128</sup> The truth is that Sulaqa's successors intended to receive the pallium from the pope in order to satisfy their selfish aims. Also, they intended to extend their authority to the diocese of India which has been controlled by the Latin bishops of Goa who never allowed bishops not of their own to set foot in Malabar. This is made clear by the petition of Hormiz Iliyya Asmar, metropolitan of Amid addressed in 1580 to Pope Gregory XIII on behalf of Denha, the Chaldean catholicos. In this petition, the metropolitan of Amid asked the pope to treat Malabar graciously and provide it with bishops who know their peculiar rituals, language and denominations. He also entreated the pope to address letters to the Portuguese Viceroy of India instructing him to assist the Chaldean bishops who are delegated by the patriarch and allow them to pass through Goa after they have presented a

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<sup>124</sup> Diyarbakir in modern Turkey. TRANS.

<sup>125</sup> Butrus Nasri, *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, 2: 155.

<sup>126</sup> Nasri, 2: 151.

<sup>127</sup> Nasri, 2: 141.

<sup>128</sup> Nasri, *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, 2: 145.

statement of their faith to him.<sup>129</sup> The reason is that although the Chaldeans outwardly expressed their submission to Rome, they inwardly adhered to the Nestorian heresy. This is made clear in the case of the bishops who were sent to Malabar following Sulaqa which impelled Rome to cut off their relations with the church of India as shall be seen later.

### **CHAPTER SIX: THE BISHOPS YUSUF (JOSEPH), ABRAHAM AND SHIM'UN (SIMON).**

Of the bishops the Catholicoses Shim'un III, Basidi and Iliyya dispatched to Malabar in 1490 and 1502, none remained except Jacob. He was an old man at the end of his life. Therefore, the Latin missionaries did not pay much attention to him. However, one of them, Francis Xavier, established strong friendship with him. In a letter Xavier addressed to the king of Portugal in 1546, he enumerated his virtues saying, "Our father Jacob, the Aramaean metropolitan, has been in this country for forty-five years serving God and your Majesty. As much as you and all the governors of India hold him with contempt, God is pleased with his virtues and holiness."<sup>130</sup> After prolonged strife of serving the church of Malabar, he passed away in 1549.

In 1555, 'Abd Yeshu', successor of Sulaqa, ordained Joseph, Sulaqa's brother, a bishop for Malabar. Joseph proceeded to India in the company of Elijah Asmar, metropolitan of Amid and the Dominicans Ambrose and Anton. Shortly afterwards, Asmar returned to Amid. As to Ambrose, he first stayed in Goa teaching theology in the Monastery of the Preaching Fathers, but then moved to Cochin where he passed away in 1557. Joseph, being

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<sup>129</sup> The Chaldean bishops reverted to the Nestorian fold and cut off their relations with the See of Rome. The reason is that a Chaldean bishop quarreled with a Latin bishop of the Capuchin Order who was sent by Rome to administer the Chaldean denomination. The rift was not redressed until 1840 in the time of Patriarch Isaiah Jacob who succeeded Yuhanna Hormiz because Pope Leo XII, has since 1827, eliminated the dichotomy between the Patriarchate of Mosul and that of Amid (Diyarbakir). He decreed that a single patriarch, designated as the Patriarch of Babil (Babylon), should sit in Mosul. For some personal reasons, Isaiah Jacob abdicated his position in 1848 and was succeeded by Yusuf VI, Odo. In Odo's time the Chaldeans attempted once more to split from the church because of the constant interference of the Church of Rome in their affairs and the changes it made in their Eastern rite. In addition, it placed them under the absolute authority of Rome. Later, however, they returned to the Chaldean fold having totally submitted to Rome.

<sup>130</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 92–93.

Nestorian, opposed the seminary founded by the Portuguese in Kodungalor and was deported to Lisbon.

When the Malabarians lost patience and hope in having Bishop Joseph return to Malabar, they wrote to Catholicos Iliyya (Elijah) VI to send them another bishop. In 1558, Elijah sent a Nestorian Bishop Abraham of 'Ayn Kawa.<sup>131</sup> At first the Malabarians resisted him because of his faith which is contrary to theirs. After spending three years in Lisbon, Bishop Joseph managed to return to Malabar having received the favor of Queen Catherine of Portugal. He promised her to bring Malabar under the authority of Rome. But no sooner he arrived in Goa than the Portuguese arrested him because they suspected his faith. When Abraham continued his episcopal activity in Malabar, the Latins who sought an opportunity to achieve their aim, released Joseph in order to have him help them in Malabar. But he faced opposition by Bishop Abraham. Thus, the fire of controversy rekindled and the congregation split into two factions. Using this schism as a pretext, the Portuguese deported Bishop Abraham to Europe. Feeling free, Bishop Joseph returned to the Nestorian faith. In 1567, the Portuguese deported him for the second time to Portugal and then to Rome where he passed away.

Having escaped the clutches of the Portuguese, Bishop Abraham journeyed to Rome. Being a prevaricator, he condemned the Nestorian heresy and was reordained. For his disgraceful submission to Rome, the pope permitted him to return to Malabar as the head of the Syrians in Goa. But the Dominicans arrested him and cast him into prison on the grounds that he had deceived the pope and thus he was unworthy of a pallium. Abraham fled prison and went to Malabar where he was received by the people with great joy. In his letter to the Catholicos Elijah VI, Abraham explained how his tumultuous affairs had finally turned peaceful. He says, "Like a hammer pounding a stone the Portuguese tried to pound my head." He asked the catholicos to dispatch a bishop to assist him in his work. The catholicos responded, and in 1579, sent a bishop called Simon whom the Portuguese arrested and deported to Europe. In 1599, Simon died in the prison of the Franciscan Friars. Abraham's enemies tried by several means to arrest him but he fled their dragnet. In 1599, they invited him to attend a council convened at Goa presided by Archbishop Matthew, but he excused himself for being ill or too old.

When complaints against Abraham reached Pope Clement VIII, he, on January 27, 1595, ordered his deputy Alexis da Menezes, archbishop of

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<sup>131</sup> Ayn Kawa is at present a part of the city of Arbil in Iraq. TRANS.



Goa, to examine his faith. When Menezes found that Abraham was still an adherent to the Nestorian heresy, he condemned him. But on February 24, 1597, Abraham ordained a man named Gurgis (George) from the ancient family of Pakalomattom as an archdeacon and entrusted to him the administration of the church of Malabar. Gurgis accepted this arrangement on condition that he should not relinquish his orthodox faith.<sup>132</sup> However, Abraham died still adhering to the Nestorian faith and was buried in the church of Angamali.

It should be admitted that despite his prevarication, Abraham labored much in serving the church of Malabar. He defended the rights of the Malabarians who were oppressed by the Latins. He also built many churches. The Malabarian Rev. Philip Edavazhikal mentioned that the pagan king of Korthuruthy antagonized the Syrians of his kingdom. They left for other provinces where they built churches in Mulanthuruthi, Kottayam, Chonukam, Kallicherry and Parum. Shortly afterward, he pardoned them and they left Mulanthuruthi and returned to Korthuruthy.

The library of Timothy Abimalek, Nestorian metropolitan of Tarchur in Malabar, contains a Syriac manuscript transcribed in the time of Bishop Abraham. It escaped the hands of the tyrannical Menezes. The copyist conferred upon Abraham super qualities like, "Vigilant Administrator, Good Shepherd, Wise Counselor and Prudent Skipper." He also called him "Bishop Abraham, metropolitan of India." The manuscript is actually a *fanqitho* (Service Book) for the whole year, containing a collection of church services according to the tradition of the Monastery of Gabriel and Abraham near Mosul also called the High Monastery. The Malabarian copyist, priest Matta, son of Joseph Ponnur Koden, finished its transcription on Friday September, 1585 at the church of the Virgin in Kottamankulam. The manuscript belongs to the Nestorians and not to the modern Chaldeans for the following reasons. First, it contains a metrical hymn about the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary beginning with verses from the Psalms. Of these is a metrical hymn beginning with verse "The Host" in which the author seeks the intercession of the leaders of the Nestorian heresy. It says, "O partisans of Deodore, Theodore and Nestorius, pray for us that the Egyptians' darkness would not enter the church." By the "Egyptians' darkness," he meant the teaching of St. Cyril of Alexandria of One Nature and One Qnumo (Syriac for person) of Christ. Second, the author does not use the phrase of "Mother of God." Instead, he says in conformity with the Nestorian tradi-

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<sup>132</sup> See the tract of the Chorepsicopus Matta Konat still in manuscript form.

tion that, “This book was transcribed at the church of Mart (Syriac for Lady or Saint) Mary the Virgin Mother of Light. Third, he says that he transcribed this book in the time of Simon the Catholicos and Metropolitan of the East.” This Simon is, the Nestorian Catholicos Elijah (1558–1591) who was also called Simon.<sup>133</sup> The church in this context is the ancient and Orthodox Church of the Virgin in the town of Kottamankulam.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE SEMINARIES OF KODUNGALLOR AND VIAPICOTTA

Juan da Albuquerque was the first metropolitan of Goa. He established in it a special place for torturing the heretics. In 1539, he sent a Franciscan friar named Vincent da Laco to entice the Syrians to bear the Roman yoke, ie. to embrace the faith of the Church of Rome. The first thing Vincent did shortly after his arrival in Malabar was to set up an orphanage for Syrian orphans. Realizing that teaching was the best means to sow the seed of his Roman faith in that fertile soil, he converted the orphanage into a seminary in 1546. He succeeded in attracting many Syrian children by offering them gifts, food and free education in addition to other means of enticement. Rome intended to treat the Syrians with charity at the beginning. Thus, the school flourished for seven years without a problem. In 1549, it had about a hundred native students according to the letter of Francis Xavier addressed in the same year to the Prior of the Franciscan Order.

Bishop Joseph, previously mentioned, who was inwardly Nestorian, declared shortly after arriving in Malabar, that he will not confer the office of priesthood upon the graduates of Vincent’s school unless they mastered the Syriac language. Since this language was not taught at the school, the Syrians declined to send their children to it. Thus, Vincent miserably failed because he could not implant the Papal principles among the Syrians.

Faced with this problem, the Latins thought of contriving another means to ensnare the Syrians. They arrested Bishop Joseph in Goa on the pretext that he was Nestorian and deported him to Europe to be tried in Lisbon, capital of Portugal, as said earlier. In 1577, they set up a press and disseminated their faith among the Syrians in both the Malayalam and the Tamil languages.

In 1581, the Jesuits founded a seminary at Viapicotta in which they taught the Syriac language. Also, they allowed the clerics to use their own vestments. Students began to join the school for some time, but then quit

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<sup>133</sup> Kottamankulam Nasri, *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, 2: 150.

by the instigation of Bishop Abraham. His deputy, Archdeacon Gurgis (Gevargese), went a step further preventing the schools' staff from entering Syrian churches. This time, too, the Latins failed to accomplish their purpose.

### CHAPTER EIGHT: THE FIRST PERSECUTION

The plan Albuquerque devised to attract the Syrians to the faith of Rome failed. To rectify the failure, Pope Clement VIII, sent in 1594, the Augustinian Alexis da Menezes, as an archbishop of Goa. He provided him with the necessary means to force the Syrians to embrace the faith of Rome. Menezes was courageous and able to challenge any power that stood in his way. The first thing this tyrannical man did was to prevent Syrian bishops to come to India by stationing guards all over the Portuguese ports in India and Iran. He even succeeded in preventing a certain Syrian bishop at a place called Hormoz from entering India. Meantime, he enticed Archdeacon Gurgis promising to make him the head of the church of Malabar, but Gurgis scoffed at him. He went on to convene a large council of clergymen and laymen at the town of Angamali which decided that no bishop will be accepted unless sent by the Nestorian patriarch. Moreover, Gurgis forbade the Latin friars and the teachers of Viapicotta seminary from entering Syrian churches.

When things worsened, Menezes decided to travel to Malabar in order to weaken the archdeacon and subjugate the Syrians to his faith. He arrived in Cochin on February 1, 1599 accompanied by armed soldiers. First, he thought it was necessary to win the friendship and assistance of the native kings. As the raja of Cochin was then more famous and powerful than other rajas, and was also a friend of the Portuguese, Menezes bribed him with thirty thousand pieces of silver, or according to others, forty thousand pieces of gold. The raja promised to help him accomplish his objective. Thus, Menezes proceeded with his agenda. He issued an order to Archdeacon (Gurgis) to meet him in Cochin. After seeking the advice of his men Gurgis consented. He proceeded to Cochin accompanied by three thousand Syrian men to protect him. Menezes expressed desire to visit the Syrian churches provided that Gurgis accompany him. Noticing the wrathful signs on his face, Gurgis at first unwillingly agreed but then rejected his demand. But Menezes would not change his plan. He decided to visit the churches alone. First, he first visited the seminary at Viapicotta. At the church of Aydapelli he delivered a sermon beginning with the words of the Lord Christ, "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber." (John 10: 1).

Menezes went on saying that their patriarch<sup>134</sup> is a thief and a robber, and that the only way to salvation is through the Church of Rome. His words provoked the resentment of the congregation. When the raja of Cochin heard what happened, he feared that people would attack Menezes and tear him into pieces. He advised him not to say such a thing anymore. But Menezes would not listen to his advice or heed the resistance of the archdeacon and the congregation. Whenever he found himself successful, he offered the children the Sacrament of Confirmation. He also convinced the archdeacon to call a council to be attended by delegates of churches to discuss doctrinal issues. He promised that he would not oppress the Syrians. But Menezes was not trustworthy in keeping promises. Indeed, while offering the Confirmation Sacrament, and delivering sermons in the churches, he ordained many priests in order to support him in the forthcoming council. When the archdeacon learned of his intention, he issued a proclamation to all the churches warning them not to accept the dignity of the priesthood from Menezes.

What shows Menezes's shrewdness in attracting the Malabarians is that wherever he went he distributed plenty of gold to influential parishioners. Also, he granted the priesthood to their sons and relatives and whoever asked for such a privilege. All of this was done with the intention of winning the majority votes in the forthcoming council. Furthermore, he attended to the patients at home offering them monetary aid and declaring that helping the poor and the needy were the foremost duty of the clergy. Unfortunately, the bishops of Malabar were indifferent to his calculations. Moreover, Menezes won over the heathen rajas whether through promises or threats. The rajas circulated proclamations showing their approval of Menezes's actions and willingness to subjugate their Christian subjects to his authority. Thus, those heathen rajas turned against Archdeacon Gurgis whom he fully trusted for support. This led some principal churches and influential friends to cease supporting him. Furthermore, he was opposed by the newly ordained priests who numbered about a hundred. All doors were now shut before the archdeacon threatening his own position. Eventually, he had no alternative but to submit to Menezes.

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<sup>134</sup> Meaning the Nestorian Catholicos. TRANS.

## CHAPTER NINE: THE COUNCIL OF UDAYAMPERUR (DIAMPER) OF 1599

**The Reasons for its Convening.** The notorious Council of Udayamperur has a bad legacy in the history of the church of India. It forcibly subjugated Archdeacon Gurgis to the will of Metropolitan Menezes, who handed him a document containing some items to sign. They are as follows:

1—Condemn the Nestorian heresy 2—Declare that there are no two separate dogmas, one of the Apostle Thomas, and the other of the Apostle Peter. But there is only One Gospel and One Christ. 3—Accept the creed of faith which Menezes sent from Goa. 4—Hand over all the Syriac books to Menezes for either correcting them or setting them on fire. 5—Recognize the universal authority of the pope. 6—Condemn the Nestorian patriarch and sever relations with him. 7—Receive only the bishops sent by the pope and recognized by the archbishop of Goa. 8—Endorse the archbishop of Goa as the only religious leader. 9—Convene a council of all the Syrian churches. 10—The archdeacon should accompany the Archbishop of Goa upon visiting the dioceses without armed men. To the document were attached harsh orders of the rajas of Cochin and Alangad to Gurgis to submit.

**Convening the Council** When the archdeacon found no alternative but to yield, he unwillingly signed the document. He also appealed for the convention of the council in Angamali, not because of the zeal of its Syrian natives to protect the doctrines and traditions of the church, but because Portuguese authority was not as strong in Angamali as in other parts of the country. He reasoned that Angamali was far from the influence of that tyrannical (Portuguese) government. But the farsighted Menezes rejected the archdeacon's appeal. He ordered the council to convene in Udayamperur near Cochin which was the center of Portuguese activity. The invitation was addressed in the names and signatures of both Menezes and the archdeacon. It contained the following, "On June, 1599, a council will meet in the town of Udayamperur to discuss the means of disseminating the Catholic faith among the Syrians, to eradicate the heresies planted among them by the heresiarchs, to cleanse their books from impure teachings and render them suitable and acceptable, to accomplish their submission to the Catholic Church and to the Pope of Rome, the successor of the Apostle Peter and the vicegerent of Christ on earth whose authority they have rejected since time immemorial, to terminate the use of Simony,<sup>135</sup> to set in order the

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<sup>135</sup> Offering church offices for money. TRANS.

celebration of the mysteries, and to discuss the church's affairs, its traditions and the condition of the clergy and the dioceses. Therefore, every church should delegate four members to the council provided with an authorization to accept its resolutions and sign on behalf of their churches."

**Opening of the Council.** The day June 20, 1599, on which the Council of Udayamperur opened, was a bad omen for the Syrians of Malabar. Delegates of churches, priests, deacons, prominent Latin Jesuits of Cochin and the newly ordained priests arrived at the council. They numbered eight hundred thirteen including thirty-three priests, twenty deacons and six hundred sixty laymen. The archdeacon Gurgis and the delegations of two churches were late attending the council. But no delegates from Travancore and Kunamkulam attended. In order to insure victory, Menezes urged the Portuguese governor in Cochin to dispatch a number of officials with armed troops to intimidate the members.

When quorum was obtained, Menezes opened the council with a speech on the offering of the Sacrifice<sup>136</sup> and on heresies. The members were forced to sign on their behalf and on behalf of those who delegated them. They endorsed the council's resolutions which have been already prepared. Then, the resolutions were read. Certainly, Menezes did not invite the Syrians in order to discuss or consult with them, but to force them to endorse the resolutions. Indeed, no delegate was given the opportunity to present his opinion on any issue; he only had to agree. Worse still, the newly ordained priests approved the presented issues. Naturally, this was Menezes' objective in promoting more than fifty young men to the dignity of the priesthood since the invitations were sent out to convene the council until it actually met. Adding to this, the bribes of rings, gold crosses inlaid with gems and precious stones, Menezes offered the rulers of Malabar. Also, he conferred on the two Rajas of Purkad and Kundara the title of "Brother in arms of the King of Portugal." who supported him with utmost power to accomplish his purpose.<sup>137</sup>

Historians mention that the priests Francis and Jacob were most fanatical in supporting Menezes. Jacob read the form of the oath expecting the members of the council to accept it. Some did and some did not. Other members swore to endorse only the bishop delegated by the Patriarch of

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<sup>136</sup> The Holy Eucharist. TRANS.

<sup>137</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 103.

Baghdad that is Antioch. In sum, the council criticized the Malabarian Syrians for not maintaining the doctrine of two natures in Christ.<sup>138</sup>

Two observations are in order in this context. First, The Syrian church of Malabar was formerly subject to the Patriarch of Antioch. But the bishops who were sent by the Nestorian patriarch distorted the truth saying that they were delegated by the Patriarch of Baghdad who is the Patriarch of Antioch. Second, the Syrian church of Malabar maintained the same dogma of the See of Antioch that is the union of the two natures of Christ.

### **The Council's Resolutions**

The council continued its deliberations for six days during which it issued 267 resolutions concerning matters of dogma, rituals and administration. Some of them are lengthy. They were divided into nine categories. They were hastily read giving the members no time to comprehend or scrutinize them which indicates that the council was a sham. It was only intended to approve what Menezes had prepared beforehand. No wonder that its resolutions served a coup de grace to the rites and traditions of the Syrians of Malabar. Indeed, the council altered the substance and form of the Eucharist, the shape of the altars and the vestments. All of this was intended to Latinize the church of Malabar. The council replaced the use of the leavened bread in the Mass (Eucharist) with unleavened bread, the Wednesday fasting into Saturday and moved the observation of fasting in the evening to midnight. It also converted the Syrian festivals into Latin festivals. Furthermore, the council instituted the belief in purgatory and the Indulgences, the worship of images of saints and of mentioning the name of the pope in the Mass and prayers. Also, it forbade the marriage of priests and forced the already married priests to shed their wives. It granted the Jesuits full freedom to preach in the churches without the permission of their clergy. Finally, each of the council's members was forced to accept only the bishops and priests appointed by the pope. Those who refused to recant their faith were made victims of the Inquisition of Goa.

Menezes proceeded to set on fire the Syrian books used by the church of Malabar. Nothing was left of them except the Liturgy of the Apostles which, in turn, was distorted. However, Menezes permitted the use of Syriac language in the church. He went on to divide the church of Malabar into sixty-five chorepiscopates. To each one he assigned a chorepiscopus and supplied him with a book of catechism.

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<sup>138</sup> The *History of Angen*.

The council placed the church of Malabar under the protection of the King of Portugal. In return, the king would send about fifteen thousand silver cruzadoos to the priests as a gift for the celebration of the Mass. He also sent great quantities of wine for the Eucharist. The council ended its deliberations on June 26, 1599.

## CHAPTER TEN: THE SECOND PERSECUTION

The Syrians of Malabar were not pleased with being forced to accept the acts of the Council of Udayamperur. Immediately after it dispersed, they held a meeting confirming on oath that they would always adhere to the traditions of their elders. They were right. In fact, prior to the meeting of the council, they did not profess the imaginary supremacy of the pope. According to the historian Gouveya, they considered the pope of Rome and the Church of Rome as enemies of the Christians. For this reason, for a half-century following the meeting of the council, the period is designated as "The period of the struggle of the Church." Throughout this period, the church patiently endured hardships and calamities until God replaced them with peace. It was then that the church began to savor the sweet taste of its patience.

When the council ended, Menezes went throughout the dioceses with indefatigable rigor to insure the implementation of the decisions of that Robber's Council by force and by money. At the village of Kallarkat, he offered the children candy stuffed with pieces of gold which attracted the villagers. He became exemplary in this sordid action.

Menezes continued to control the Syrian churches. He installed in them images of saints and forced the people to worship them. Some of these images could still be seen in some of the churches even after they were reclaimed by their orthodox congregations. Wherever he went, Menezes committed books and manuscripts to fire to the extent that not a single document was left containing information about the condition of the church of Malabar in the Middle Ages.<sup>139</sup> Having spent ten months in Mala-

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<sup>139</sup> In his book *The Nestorians and Their Faith*, 1: 13, George Percy Badger says that, "The Latin priests treat the Nestorians (Chaldeans) the same as those who had embraced their faith in Iraq. They cast thousands of their books which were in their Library in Mosul into the Tigris River." What is ridiculous, however, is that the Papist priest Ishaq Armala, has distorted this truth by attributing this sordid act to the Syrians themselves because of their religious zeal. He says, "In latter times, religious zeal impelled the Syrians in Iraq, India and other countries to commit their



bar and having achieved his aim, Menezes ordained in 1600 the Latin Francis Roz, a bishop for Angamali by order of Pope Clement VIII, and the request of King Philip VIII of Spain. He returned home triumphant. Meantime, Roz transferred his seat from Angamali to Travancore close to the Portuguese colony. In 1601, he translated for the Malabarians the Orders of Baptism, Matrimony and Unction from Latin into Syriac. In 1616, the Chaldean Catholicos Iliyya (Elijah) addressed a letter to Pope Paul V, asking him to confirm his faith. The reason is that he was intending to visit Malabar and tried not to disturb those Syrians in Koma and Hormiz who were researching the veracity of the faith of Rome. In his letter Iliyya says, "Not all the natives of our country are knowledgeable of religious matters. This is why those who research the faith oppress them or rob their money. Indeed, a priest of Amid (Diyarbakir) died because of their oppression."

In 1617, Francis Roz passed away and was succeeded by Jerome Xavier who died at Goa in the same year. He was succeeded by Stephen de Pritto 1624. In 1634, as Stephen had advanced in age, Francis Caria was appointed his deputy. He ran the church with an iron rod. He stopped the use of the Syriac language during the worship and compelled the clergy to use Latin instead. However, the Syrians who perforce succumbed to the yoke of the Church of Rome remained adamant in observing the traditions of their ancestors. They did so despite injustice, plunder and fire inflicted upon them. Meantime, they tried to find a propitious opportunity to free themselves from Rome.

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books to fire because they contained the teachings of heretics. However, the Syrians of the village of Qaraqosh, who rejected Monophysitism and embraced Catholicism in 1780, cast into the well of the Tahira (Virgin Mary) church in Mosul all the books containing heretical teachings. Many of these volumes contained historical and scientific information covering every discipline of knowledge." See Ishaq Armala, *al-Suryan fi al-Qutr al-Misri*, 47–48. However, Armala feigns sorrow over the Library of the Shaghura Monastery in Saydanaya and ascribes the burning of its books to the stupidity of the nuns. He also feels sorry for the Library of the Lady Saint Thecla, whose books were committed to fire by a Rum (Byzantine) Orthodox bishop for his hatred of the Syriac language. Likewise, he regrets the burning of libraries by the Muslims. Armala, *Ibid.*, 48.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE BELIEF OF THE SYRIAN CHURCH OF INDIA UP TO THE ASSEMBLING OF THE COUNCIL OF UDAYAMPERUR

The Syrian Church of India was an integral part of the orthodox dioceses subject to the legitimate Patriarch of Antioch. This is explicit from its belief in the unity of the Natures of Christ.

It is an established fact that the dogma of One Nature in Christ prevailed in the Christian church before its division. The belief of Two Natures in Christ was first proclaimed by Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople<sup>140</sup> and was condemned by the First Council of Ephesus (431). Leo 1, bishop of Rome, supported Nestorius' belief in his notorious *Tome* approved by Emperor Marcian for political reasons.<sup>141</sup> Marcian and his wife Pulcheria were partisans of Leo and enemies of Dioscorus of Alexandria.<sup>142</sup> Thus, the Council of Chalcedon (451) endorsed this faith contrary to the decisions of the Council of Ephesus presided by St. Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, in its seventh canon, the council condemned anyone who adds or diminishes from its formula of faith.

Ascribing the miraculous actions of Christ to his divinity and the earthly actions to his humanity is instituted in Leo's *Tome*. Leo says, "Christ is in two natures, God and Man. The God in him performs the divine acts while the Man in him, the lowly acts." This invalidated the Nicene Creed which ascribed the divine and the lowly actions to One who is alone the Incarnated Word of God. It says "True God from True God, who descended from heaven, was incarnate, crucified for us, suffered, died, buried and resurrected according to the Scriptures."

Based on this essential belief before the division of the church universal, the Syrian Church chanted the Trisagion as follows, "You who was cru-

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<sup>140</sup> See Gieseler, I: 391 and Metropolitan Jirjis Shahin, *Nahj Wasim*, 16. The full title of Gieseler's book is *Text-Book of Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Francis Cunningham, I (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blannchard, 1836). TRANS.

<sup>141</sup> Michael Rabo, *Chronicle*, 168 and Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 72.

<sup>142</sup> See Gieseler, 1: 408.

<sup>143</sup> It seems that the members of the Council of Chalcedon were not convinced of the veracity of St. Cyril's belief. Still, they proclaimed his orthodoxy in order to win the Egyptians as John Gieseler made clear in his history, 1: 408. Gieseler said that the weakness that the dominating party was not convinced of the belief of St. Cyril is clear from the fact when Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, refuted Cyril's Twelve Anathemas in 458.

cified for us.”<sup>144</sup> The Chaldean Bishop Addai Scher says about Rabula, metropolitan of Edessa (412–435), that, “According to Rabula’s teaching, there is one nature and one *qnumo* (person) in Christ. He goes on to say that in his letter to Andrew, bishop of Samosata, Rabula says, “To say that in Christ there are two natures after the Incarnation disturbs me a great deal.”<sup>145</sup> Now, if Rabula was the one who added the phrase of “You who was crucified for us,” to the Trisagion, it follows that Rabula was partisan of St. Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>146</sup>

The Syrian church of India, being one of the orthodox dioceses, adhered continuously to the belief of the unity of the natures of Christ. It used the phrase, “You who was crucified for us.” as affirmed by Bar Salibi (d. 1172).<sup>147</sup>

We have already seen that the Udayamperur Council criticized the Syrians of Malabar for not maintaining two natures in Christ.<sup>148</sup>

There are still three stone crosses bearing inscriptions in the Pahlavi language of the Sassanids. One is at the Latin chapel in Mylapore discovered by the Portuguese in St. Thomas Mountain near Mylapore in 1547. The other two are deposited in the new Syrian Cathedral in Kottayam. These crosses are similar in form and bear the same inscription. But, in addition to the Pahlavi inscription, the cross at the Cathedral of Kottayam bears a Syriac inscription in the Estrangelo script of St. Paul’s saying, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>149</sup> According to Dr. Burnel, this cross is more recent than the other two, and dates back to the tenth century; the other two date back to the seventh or the eighth centuries. The Pahlavi inscription was scientifically examined and translated by European experts. Generally, Brunel’s translation is more reliable. It is as follows, “By the punishment done on the cross, the suffering of this One

<sup>144</sup> For a full analysis of the origin of the Trisagion and its introduction to church rite, see Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Syracuse University Press, 1986), reprinted Gorgias Press, Chapter 8, 69–73. TRANS.

<sup>145</sup> See Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, and Opera Selecta*, 2230.

<sup>146</sup> Addai Scher, *Tarikh Chaldo wa Athur*, 2: 135.

<sup>147</sup> See Bar Salibi, *The Tenth Chapters*, especially Chapter Two on signing of the Cross and Chapter Ten on the Trisagion.

<sup>148</sup> What the author intends is that they did not hold the belief that the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human, were united in one person but were still separate and distinct from each other. TRANS.

<sup>149</sup> St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, 6: 14. TRANS.

who is True God and God on high, a perfect guide and of ever sanctity.”<sup>150</sup> No doubt, that more than any other church, what has been said above applies to the Syrian Orthodox Church. This is not to mention that the Syriac Estrangelo script belongs specifically to this church.

It is evident from the above that the Syrian church of India was, concerning the faith, in total agreement with the Apostolic See of Antioch up to the meeting of the Council of Udayamperur. Consequently, it was within the Eastern dioceses subject to this See.

## **CHAPTER TWELVE: THE MALABARIANS MAKE A COVENANT BEFORE THE CROSS OF COONEN**

In 1637, Archdeacon Gurgis passed away and Archdeacon Tuma took his place. Malabar historians say that around 1652, an Eastern bishop came to Malabar. Upon his arrival in Surat, the Latins arrested him and cast him into the prison of Mylapore. His fate was to be decided by the Goa Inquisition. It happened that two deacons, one Itty that is Abraham, from Chegannoor and Curien or Quryaqos, from Kuravilangad, visited the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore. They met the Eastern bishop who related to them the problems his church was suffering. He provided them with a decree appointing archdeacon Tuma a metropolitan. He stipulated that Abraham should exercise no episcopal authority until he was lawfully ordained. A few days later, the Eastern bishop was sent to Goa via Cochin. Crowds congregated in front of the king's palace beseeching him to have the Portuguese authorities set him free. While the king was deliberating the case, he was silenced by the bribes he received (from the Portuguese). Meanwhile, thousands of men thronged around the citadel of Cochin in order to rescue the eastern bishop. Since there was no more than three hundred Portuguese in the citadel, the guards became scared and, closing the gates, they secretly smuggled him out of the citadel and sent him to Goa. Afterwards, nothing was known about him.

Sources differ about how archdeacon Tuma died. The Latin writers, Jerri and Paulo, say that he was burned in Goa by order of the Inquisition. Others claim that a big stone was tied around his neck and was thrown into the sea. When the people learned of his fate, they were grieved and angered. They met at Mattancheri, a town near Cochin, on Friday, January 3, 1653, and installed a stone cross at a place called Coonen. They tied to it a long

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<sup>150</sup> Burnel, *Indian Antiquity*, 3: 308–316 and E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 10.

rope, and holding unto it, solemnly swore to renounce any association with Rome. They signed a covenant containing their pledge. Meantime, one of the laymen in the crowd said that this covenant will be readily denounced. But a zealous priest, Itty Thoman, a Canaanite from the Anjilimootil family of Kallissery, picked a dry reed and broke it into two halves saying, "If these two halves can be pieced together again, it will be possible for us to remain united with the Franks." The news of this affair spread like a lightening. The Syrians of Malabar rejected the faith of Rome. Their number increased to two hundred thousand except for four hundred who remained loyal to Rome. Those who rejected Rome came to be known as the new group and the others as the old group. The Cross of Coonen can still be seen.

When the king (raja) of Cochin learned about the fate of the eastern bishop, he fell down from the steps of his palace dead with a broken neck. The natives of his kingdom stood on the shore of the gulf lamenting his death. As to the eastern bishop who was unjustly murdered, the Catholic missionaries themselves testified that he was Orthodox.<sup>151</sup>

The history of Malabar mentions that the eastern bishop was a Patriarch, but does not say that his title was Ignatius.<sup>152</sup> There is also a Syriac letter by archdeacon Tuma addressed to Ignatius Simon, patriarch of Antioch, dated Tuesday 21, December, 1660, that is seven years after the incident of the martyred bishop. It was delivered by Deacon Stephen of Amid (probably Stephen Asmar), containing the episode of the martyred bishop and requesting the patriarch to send a patriarch or a cleric of the same rank to Malabar well-versed in Syriac. Following is a brief text of the letter:

"From Mar Tuma, bishop of India and all the presbyters, administrators, periodeutses (visiting clergy) and the faithful sons of the blessed church of St. Thomas, to Patriarch Simon who presides over Nineveh and the great city of Antioch. You are the head of this diocese and its good shepherd. We would like to inform you of the following incident which happened in India. Pope Ignatius, who enjoys full authority, sent us the one called patriarch Ignatius. Ignatius boarded a ship and without his knowledge went through enemies, robbers, murderers, heathens and Muslims. Finally, he reached the city of Mylapore. When monks from the Monastery of the

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<sup>151</sup> Hough, *Christianity in India*, 2: 301 and E. M. Philip, 142.

<sup>152</sup> See the letter of Tuma V addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch around 1747, and the letter of Dionysius III, Bonnatra dated 1821 addressed to Lord Camber. It is translated from the Syriac into English and published by Professor Samuel Lee. Ignatius is the exclusive title of the Syrian Patriarchs of Antioch who assume it at their ordination. TRANS.

Jesuits saw him, they captured him like wolves and drove him by force to their abode. Following his capture, we know not what happened to him or the adversities his holiness suffered. In those days some deacons were found there. When the patriarch saw them in the church he called them secretly saying, "Here is my letter and the letter of the pope. Take them and depart immediately." When the deacons came to us, we learned from them what had happened. We were struck by great fear. Now we are abiding by the instructions of Mar Ignatius, patriarch of India and China. We were especially delighted by seeing the deacon Stephen Asmar. Since he was adorned with great faith, pure soul, abundant grace and fear of God, he was delivered from the hands of our enemies. We beseech you to send us a patriarch well-versed and efficient in Syriac. Written on Tuesday, December, 1660. We have sent Stephen of Amid from India."<sup>153</sup>

Although this letter distinguishes Mar Ignatius, patriarch of Antioch from the murdered Patriarch Ignatius, the historians of Malabar maintain that the murdered patriarch was the Patriarch of Antioch. Still, some of them claim that he was Patriarch Simon himself who died at Diyarbakir in 1660.<sup>154</sup> Another Malabarian tradition maintains that he was a patriarch named 'Abd Allah or Ignatius 'Abd Allah. This tradition was sustained by the Anglican Bishop Heber of Calcutta and his secretary Andrew Robinson (around 1825). Others say that, based on this tradition, he was probably 'Abdu of Midyat, an illegitimate patriarch of Tur 'Abdin, who was still living in 1628. In the aftermath of the disaster of the Muhalamiyya clans, he left his homeland and may have journeyed to Malabar.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, some Western historians called the murdered bishops as 'Ata Allah and made him a Nestorian. In his book, *Oriens Christianus*, the Dominican Lequien strangely makes him a Syrian orthodox, a Copt and a Nestorian simultaneously.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> See the epistolary collection written at Malabar in Syriac at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which at present is in my possession.

<sup>154</sup> Gabriel Dolabani, *The Continuation of the History of Patriarchs* at the Patriarchal Library.

<sup>155</sup> This source is as follows. Michel Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*. 3 vols. Paris: Typographe regis, 1730. The author, Patriarch Jacob III, gives no number of the volume or the page. TRANS.

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE ELECTION OF TUMA I, AND THE ZEAL OF ITTY THOMAN

When the Syrians had sworn the oath before the Cross of Coonen rejecting communion with Rome, they went to the church of Alangad and held a general meeting of clergy and lay people. Twelve priests read to archdeacon Tuma, the proclamation of the murdered bishop and the patriarch's letter. They addressed him with the title of "Tuma. Bishop of India." But they kept waiting for the arrival of a metropolitan from the Patriarch of Antioch.<sup>156</sup> They also created an advisory committee to assist him in the administration of the church. The committee consisted of the priests Itty Thoman of Anjilimootil, from Kallissery, Chandy of Pallivil of Kuravallangad, Chandy of Kuduthuruthy and Gurgis (Gevargese) Vendoor of Angamali. They issued a covenant which they signed and handed it to Tuma.

By taking this important step, the Syrians of Malabar displayed a vehement religious zeal. Still it was not satisfactory because they did not yet have a lawful bishop. The priest Itty Thoman, in his capacity as chairman of the committee, addressed a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch requesting him to send a metropolitan to legitimize Tuma's episcopal office. But, in those times it was not so easy to have a metropolitan sent by the patriarch. The nominal episcopate of Tuma offered the Latins an opportunity to dupe the Syrians into believing that, "They will never obtain through Tuma the spiritual results necessary for salvation." Thus, they were able to attract many Syrians to their side. When Itty Thoman noticed the vacillation of those who joined the Franks' fold, he advised Tuma to ordain priests and deacons lest the true faith perish. Tuma did, but his action was wrong.<sup>157</sup>

In 1656, Pope Alexander VII sent Carmelite missionaries to India to subjugate once more the Syrians to his authority. The missionaries held many meetings but had no pretext to convince the Syrians except that Tuma was an unlawful bishop. This created serious doubts in the minds of many Syrians who eventually joined them. They also succeeded in attracting two members of the advisory committee by offering them money. This urged Itty Thoman to address to one of them, Chandy of Kaduthuruthy, the following letter from Chonkunepelli recorded by Philip, the historian of Malabar: "Dear Rev. Chandy: It is well known that the Patriarch of Antioch, head of the Malabar, sent archpriest to perform the Sacraments. While this was the case, behold Roman priests said that this act was unlaw-

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<sup>156</sup> This indicates that Tuma was proclaimed a nominal bishop. TRANS.

<sup>157</sup> Philip Edavazhikal, *History of the Church of Malabar*.

ful. So, we opposed him. We met at Mattancheri and swore the well known oath. Afterwards, some laymen said that this act will be revised. It was then that I took a dry reed and broke it saying 'if it was possible that this broke reed could be put together, it would also be possible for us to unite with the Franks.' You yourself said at that time, 'Brother, there will be no change because Itty Thoman said this.' I wish I have touched the tongue which uttered these words. Indeed, the covenant which we issued and signed all of us still exists."<sup>158</sup> No need to explain more these already clear passages. They no doubt tell us of Itty's true zeal to preserve the traditions of the elders. They also demonstrate the attitude of the Syrians of Malabar regarding the administration of their church since time immemorial. Although, at times, they were controlled by bishops sent by the Nestorian patriarch, still they kept their belief that they were under the authority of the See of Antioch. It was this See which delegated these bishops to Malabar. However, the Syrians of Malabar thought that the Nestorian patriarch was only a deputy of the Patriarch of Antioch, as said above.

Indeed, the papists used Tuma to revile the Syrians saying that he was only a layman in the guise of a bishop. They went on to say that he was an eastern bishop with no authority to ordain, celebrate the Mass or consecrate the Holy Chrism. Indeed, if it were not for the zeal of the Canaanite priest Itty Thoman, the Syrian church would have not been saved from papal danger, as shall be seen later. It was Itty who organized the Syrians into group in order to resist the Latins. He instituted the oath before the Cross of Coonen, and he, as a chairman of the advisory committee, advised Tuma to do what was good for the church. And when two of his collaborators betrayed the Syrian church, he never despaired but continued struggling for the cause of the church under many hardships. He reunified the Syrians while they were scattered and saved them from the Carmelite intrigues. Moreover, when the majority of the people separated themselves from Tuma because of the adversities inflicted by the Latins, Itty was the one who consoled Tuma and shared him the bane of imprisonment. Indeed, if it were not for the divine providence which sustained him, he and Tuma would have been offered as a sacrifice on the altar of Popism in Goa, as shall be seen later. It is Itty who communicated with the Patriarch of Antioch asking him to delegate a metropolitan to legitimize Tuma's office. Re-

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<sup>158</sup> See Philip, *History of the Indian Church of St. Thomas*, paragraph 14, p. 146. Evidently, the author took much liberty in translating this passage. The original is found in Philip, *Ibid.*, 137 of the English version. TRANS.



grettably, he did not enjoy the consequences of his labor. He passed away on April 27, 1659 and was buried in the Canaanite church of Mattancheri.

#### CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE CARMELITES AND THE THIRD PERSECUTION

The Carmelite Order slowly began to spread. It gained so much strength that eventually it overwhelmed the Jesuits. At the outset, the Portuguese deceitfully feigned enmity toward the Carmelite. They intended to show the Syrians that there was a difference between the Carmelite and the Jesuits in matters of dogma in order to have them embrace their principles. They did so knowing that the Syrians had an aversion to the persecuting Jesuits and their bishops. This is why many Syrians deserted the Jesuits and joined the Carmelites who found them more tolerant. In 1659, Garcia died at Cochin. With his death the chain of bishops of Malabar belonging to the Jesuits was interrupted. Afterwards, however, the pope ordained some of them bishopric of the diocese of Kodungallor, but they were replaced with bishops from the Carmelite Order known as the bishops of Hierapolis.

At the beginning, the Carmelites pursued peaceful methods in dealing with the Syrians. They cajoled them and aroused doubts about the legitimacy of Tuma's office. Later, however, they resorted to force to have the Syrians embrace the faith of Rome. This happened when Pope Alexander VII sent Joseph Maria the Carmelite as his legate to Malabar with the designation of the Bishop of Hierapolis.<sup>159</sup> Maria continued the work of Alexis da Menezes and even outstripped him in persecuting the Syrians and forcing them to submit to Rome. He chose this method rather than a peaceful one. He used sweet talk and expensive gifts to have Tuma join Rome, but failed. Seeing that he was unsuccessful, he tried Meneze's method of seeking the support of local rajas. Many of the rajas responded, especially King Purkad, who forced their subjects to submit to the Apostolic Legate. With their help Joseph went throughout the churches intending to arrest Tuma. The king of Cochin issued a proclamation to the faithful parishioners of the churches of Mulanthuruthi and Kandanad threatening them with severe punishment if they did not deliver Tuma to the Portuguese. When the king of Cochin learned that Tuma was hiding in one of the churches, he dispatched a contingent of troops to surround it. Meantime, Joseph Maria arrived at the church with another contingent of troops. They arrested Tuma

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<sup>159</sup> Some called him Sebastian, the Italian Carmelite. See *Hierarchy of the Christians of St. Thomas*, 4.

and his assistant the priest Itty Thoman, a man who had done much for the well being of the church of Malabar. They sent them to Cochin where they were cast into prison. They waited for an opportunity to deliver them into the hands of the Portuguese.

Meanwhile, two elder men of Mulathuruthi visited the prisoners. They expressed their willingness to rescue them regardless of the cost. Itty Thoman suggested that he should exchange clothes with them. They did and Tuma and Itty sneaked out of prison under the eyes of the inept heathen guards who could not recognize them. A few days later, they were captured and delivered to the hands of the Portuguese. When the Portuguese governor learned about their case, he ordered them severely beaten and then released. Tuma and the priest Itty made their way to some mountains where they hid for fear of the Portuguese. In the meantime, Joseph the persecutor went to Mulanthuruthi to confiscate Tuma's possessions. He gave some of the gold and silver jewels to the raja of Cochin as a gift. But he set on fire Tuma's books, the Holy Chrism, the vestments and Tuma's chariot. As they were ablaze, Joseph felt sorry because he did not do as well to Tuma. On April 27, the priest Itty departed this life to be with Lord to enjoy eternal rest as a compensation for his continuous strife for the cause of the orthodox faith. A year later, Tuma sent a letter with the deacon Stephen Asmar of Amid, addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch Simon requesting him to send a bishop to validate his office as has been said earlier.

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN: GOD'S PUNISHMENT OF THE CHURCH'S ENEMIES**

The Syrians of Malabar endured adversities with patience for their love of the orthodox faith. In a short while, however, the vengeance of divine providence fell upon the persecutors. It happened that the Dutch entered India at the beginning of the seventeenth century and, like the Portuguese, set up markets in that country. Their power increased while that of the Portuguese waned until they vanquished the Portuguese and drove them out of India.

In 1663, Cochin, the impregnable port of west India which was under Portuguese control, was lost to the Dutch. With its fall the Portuguese power along the coast of Malabar, vanished. The Syrians rejoiced for this change of authority, and Tuma was now free to visit his churches. The Jesuits, Carmelites and the persecuting Joseph who worked against the Dutch, were cleared completely out of Malabar.

Before Joseph departed, he, following orders from Rome, ordained the priest Chandy of Parampil of the village of Kuravilangad, a bishop to succeed him. Chandy was called Alexander de Campo. He signed his letters as

“Alexander, Bishop of all India,” following the practice of the bishops who administered the church of India prior to its control by the Latins. Because like Tuma, Alexander (Chandy) belonged to the ancient family of Pakalomattom, many Syrians followed him because of the respect they held for the office of the archdeacons who came from that family. Mostly, however, they suspected the validity of Tum’a dignity as a bishop. In a letter addressed by Alexander de Campo to the persecuting Joseph who ordained him, and who was then at Goa, it was said, “We only need money to eradicate the name of the Archdeacon Tuma from the world.”

This was indeed the sharp religious weapon Alexander used to entice the Syrians, who swore the solemn oath at the Coonen Cross, to renounce that oath. Those who followed Bishop Chandy were called “The Old Party,” and the others “The New Party.” This took place fifty-five years since the arrival of the oppressor Bishop Alexis da Menezes in India.

As to Tuma, he found himself in a difficult situation, especially that he personally entertained doubt about his ordination. He failed to retrieve the churches which had been usurped by the Carmelites in the third persecution. Finally, they joined Alexander and became subject to Rome.

## PART THREE: THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH OF INDIA UNDER THE DUTCH

### CHAPTER ONE: THE COMING TO INDIA OF THE METROPOLITAN MAR GREGORIUS 'ABD AL-JALIL OF MOSUL AND HIS RENEWAL OF RELATIONS WITH THE SEE OF ANTIOCH

Archdeacon Tuma remained in this situation until the year 1665 considered the beginning of a happy era for the church of Malabar. In this year, 'Abd al-Jalil of Mosul, Metropolitan of Jerusalem, arrived in Malabar as the Apostolic Delegate of the Patriarch of Antioch 'Abd al-Masih I.<sup>160</sup> The Syrians of Malabar rejoiced for his coming. Immediately, Tuma approached him and 'Abd al-Jalil ordained him a lawful bishop. He handed him a document in which he professed his total submission to the See of Antioch. He also, commanded him to preserve the orthodox faith and observe church canons and apostolic traditions. Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil proceeded to assist Tuma in the administration of the church of Malabar, disseminating the orthodox dogma and confirming the authority of the Apostolic See of Antioch. After trading with his talent of faith which yielded manifold profits, 'Abd al-Jalil passed away on April 12, 1670 or 1673, and was buried in the church of Angamali.<sup>161</sup> He was the first Syrian Orthodox metropolitan who for 175 years that is from 1490 to 1665, was delegated to India by the Patriarch of Antioch.<sup>162</sup>

Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil journeyed through the country of Malabar disseminating the orthodox faith with avid boldness and zeal. He never relied on kings' help or on gold. He tried constantly to compare between the beliefs of the Syrian Church and papal teachings. Supporting his argument by evidence, he proved that since the time of the Apostle Thomas, the church

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<sup>160</sup> 'Abd al-Masih I, 1662–1686. TRANS.

<sup>161</sup> We learn from the letter of Tuma II, bishop of India, addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch, that Tuma died two years after 'Abd al-Jalil's death. Since Tuma passed away in 1671, 'Abd al-Jalil must have died in 1673.

<sup>162</sup> See Curien, *The Syrian Orthodox Church in India and its Apostolic Faith*, 1989, 98. TRANS.

of Malabar was orthodox subject to the authority of the See of Antioch. He opposed papal innovations, especially the celibacy of priests. He personally married some celibate priests when he found out that they were wallowing in sin.<sup>163</sup> He also ordained deacons. His actions were endorsed by the Syrian parishioners who respected him for his virtues.

On February 5, 1668, 'Abd al-Jalil circulated a proclamation from the great church of Kottayam to the priests of Parur, Mulanthuruthi and Kandanad explaining the beliefs and traditions of the church of Malabar before the Latins controlled it. He also made it clear that the church of Malabar was observing the canons of Nicaea and Antioch before the Latins arrived in Malabar. His purpose was to awaken the Malabarians to the dangers confronting them in order to defend and protect their faith with zeal. In the next year (1669), he circulated another proclamation to the Syrians of Mylapore expressing his sorrow for those Indian Syrians who rejected the Orthodox faith and joined the Latins, as shall be discussed later. Both proclamations were written in Syriac.

The church of Malabar began to grow steadily by the efforts of those who returned to its fold with sincerity. As a result, the relations of this church with the Apostolic See of Antioch were renewed. Since then, no trace is found showing that the church of Malabar had extended allegiance to the Nestorian Patriarchate. This proves that the church of Malabar was never under the authority of this patriarchate.

## **CHAPTER TWO: METROPOLITAN GREGORIUS 'ABD AL-JALIL OF MOSUL**

Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil was born in Mosul. He was most prominent among the fathers of the church in his time. Patriarch Shim'un (Simon) ordained him a metropolitan for Amid (Diyarbakir) in 1654 and called him Timothy at his ordination as a successor of the deceased Metropolitan 'Isa Nuwayyir. Ten years later, he was transferred to the See of Jerusalem. In 1665, Patri-

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<sup>163</sup> We read in an old Syriac manuscript including, among other subjects, the order of baptism the following: "This manuscript was copied by the priest Jirjis at the church of Magi who offered Christ the King born at Bethlehem gold, myrrh and incense. Priest Jirjis was born in July, 1638. He was ordained a priest by the laying of the hands of Mar Gregorius the Fifth Patriarch by the consent of Mar Tuma (Thomas), the Bishop of entire India and by the guarantee of the priest Tuma the teacher." This MS is in the library of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat in Pampakoda.

arch 'Abd al-Masih I (1662–1686), dispatched him to Malabar.<sup>164</sup> He managed his diocese with an apostolic zeal. After a fruitful life fraught with remarkable accomplishments, he went to his Lord on Friday April 14, 1671 and was buried in the church of Parur. He is commemorated annually with great honor.<sup>165</sup>

His service in Malabar was short but productive. It proved that he was a competent leader. In fact, the Syrians of Malabar still reiterate his exemplary deeds. In 1727, Tuma IV, metropolitan of Malabar, his priests, deacons and members of his community, addressed a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch and to Basilius, Catholicos of Jerusalem, describing Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil. They called him "The distinguished Malphono (teacher) and wise skipper." They further said that, "Our fathers were encouraged by his arrival and became firm in the orthodox faith. He lived until 1671 and died on Friday, April 14, and was buried in the church of Parur. Today, we commemorate his death and hold a banquet for the parishioners of the church where he was buried."

Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil was learned, sagacious and well versed in the Syriac language and church jurisprudence. This is attested by his Syriac correspondence. He was also endowed with an elegant hand writing in both Syriac and Arabic.

Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil, may God be gracious to him, brought to Malabar magnificent vestments to be used in the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass) as mentioned by Shukr Allah of Aleppo, maphryono of Malabar, in his tract of 1751–1752.<sup>166</sup> This is in addition to the gold and silver church vessels he left behind in Malabar. Moreover, 'Abd al-Jalil brought with him a great amount of his family's money and bought agricultural land in Parur. Following his death, the land became a patrimony of the church of Parur where he was buried. In a short time, it became the richest church in Malabar.

In a letter addressed by some clergymen, deacons and laymen of Malabar to Gregorius, metropolitan of Jerusalem, is mentioned that the money of Metropolitan Gregorius is kept intact, and protected.<sup>167</sup> In 1751, Maphryono Shukr Allah summoned the Syrians of Parur to Kandanad and asked

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<sup>164</sup> See the patriarch's letter to the Syrians of Mylapore.

<sup>165</sup> In the previous chapter, the author says that Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil died on April 12 either in 1670 or 1673. Also, in the previous chapter, he says that 'Abd al-Jalil was buried in Angamali, while here he says he was buried in Parur. TRANS.

<sup>166</sup> See *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchyya*, vol. 7. no. 5, 246.

<sup>167</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.

them to hand him back the money. They admitted some of it and promised to give it to him when he visited them. As to the rest of the amount they said that it has been scattered around.<sup>168</sup>

### CHAPTER THREE: THE LETTERS OF METROPOLITAN GREGORIUS 'ABD AL-JALIL

We have mentioned earlier a part of the good news about Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil and pointed to the two letters he addressed to some churches. His intention was to confirm people in the orthodox faith. Following is a gist of these letters.

The letter addressed to the churches of Parur, Mulanthuruthi and Kandanad<sup>169</sup> was issued at the great church of Kottayam on February 5, 1668. It begins thus, "In the Name of the Father the begetter, and the Son the begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeded from the Father, One true God in Three Persons, to Him be glory and upon us His mercy forever. It bore the following signature. "The wretched Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil, servant of Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, Patriarch of the holy city of Jerusalem, to the beloved sons the priest Gurgis, periodeutes (visiting priest) of the church of Parur, priest Jacob, periodeutes of the church of Mulanthuruthi and the faithful of that church, priest Matta and priest Zechariah together with the Syrian deacons, and notable men and women, young men and young women, rich and poor in the two towns of Mulanthuruthi and Kandanad." Following the usual introduction, he expressed desire to see them, especially when he heard about the problems they suffered which were caused by some ignorant people who renounced the ancient faith of their fathers and joined the Franks. He goes on to say, "These men were heathens converted to the orthodox faith by the Syrians. But now they returned to their vomit and became heathens once more. They did this by the help of the tyrannical kings and the Franks. They convened arbitrary councils changing the faith instituted by the Holy Apostles who were from our own race. They altered the permanent canons issued by the Holy Council of Nicaea and distorted the ancient venerable traditions. They invented new repulsive customs and fell into the abyss of repugnant heresy trying to drag others into it."

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<sup>168</sup> See *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7, no. 5, 252.

<sup>169</sup> A copy of this letter is with the Edavazhikal family and another one is in my possession.

‘Abd al-Jalil continues that the Latins’ heretical doctrines and blasphemies are too many to be cited. He promises the Syrians that he will explain them individually when he meets them. He advised them not to have their zeal for the Syrians’ faith falter despite the ordeals which might be inflicted on them. He presented testimonies from the Bible and the sayings of St. Ephraim to endure these ordeals as did the martyrs who suffered to keep the faith of their forefathers. He rejoined that, “These false Indians deserted the true faith of the Syrians and embraced a new faith for nearly one thousand six hundred years after the Apostle St. Thomas set foot in India. During this period thousands of bishops, priests, deacons and faithful men, women and children, whose number only God can count, emerged in India. Would you concede that all of these people will be thrown into the fire of hell? Not at all! In fact, anyone who holds such notion is a blasphemer and possessed by the devil. Now, if these people were of orthodox faith, it follows that anyone who altered that faith is blameworthy. Indeed, even today there are still living many sons of priests who were lawfully married. But when the Franks controlled India, they forbade priests and deacons to marry thus becoming the cause of their fall into sexual immorality. This same debauchery was the cause of the Deluge which swept the earth and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Certainly, they have abandoned matrimony which the Scripture calls “godliness” and loved depravity which is “ungodliness.”

‘Abd al-Jalil goes on to discuss the five fastings instituted by the Syrian Orthodox Church which the Franks do not have. He moves on to say that he will not elaborate other heretical teaching of the Franks regarding the properties of the three persons of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the unity of the natures of Christ, his will and person. He further says, “Know that the name of the Church of Rome does not exist in the Scriptures. After all, the Fathers of the general Council of Nicaea did not say “We believe in one church of Rome, but in one holy catholic (ecumenical) apostolic church.” ‘Abd al-Jalil blames the Indians who joined the Franks saying, “They learned from the Franks to profess ‘the Creed of the holy Church of Rome’. How darkened their minds have become! How awful it is that they have forsaken the Syrian orthodox faith and noble traditions and embraced the false faith of the Franks. They have sunk into the abyss of their heresies just to gain a few pennies. They adhered to repugnant traditions like one who loses gold and finds ashes. Woe to them on the day of Judgment when the true laborers in the Lord’s vineyard and those who enter through the narrow gate rejoice, while the lot of those who loved the world will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth.”



The letter to the Syrians of Mylapore<sup>170</sup> was written in 1669. It was addressed to the Syrians bishops, priests, deacons and laymen of Mylapore. ‘Abd al-Jalil tells them that he is from the city of Mosul-Nineveh, that he has administered the diocese of Amid (Diyarbakir) for ten years. He was offered the office of the Patriarch of Jerusalem which he held for one year before he was dispatched to India. Now he has spent four years in this country saddened and wearied by the conflict among the Syrian Indians. He goes on to say that the disciples of the Apostle Thomas abandoned the faith of the Syrians and joined the Franks. He does not know what to do. He asks them to impart special care to the Indian priest Gurgis who is coming to visit the tomb of the Apostle Thomas, and with whom he delivered this letter. He says that Gurgis is in need of their help and he is zealous for the faith of the Syrians. He requests them to send their reply with Gurgis and his companions upon their return from Mylapore.

We have also come upon two other letters of Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Jalil written in Syriac and an Arabic *ṣajaliyya*.<sup>171</sup> It begins thus, “I praise an immaculate Virgin.” At the church of St. Thomas in Mosul, there is an anaphora containing a lengthy comment in eloquent Syriac dated October 13, 1658, written by ‘Abd al-Jalil.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: BISHOP TUMA II

Bishop Tuma I died in 1673, and the church of Malabar was bereft by his death. Like sheep without a shepherd it became a prey to ravenous wolves. The priests, deacons and lay people met in a church and proclaimed Tuma’s brother, the Archdeacon Tuma, a bishop awaiting the See of Antioch to send them shepherds. From the letter Tuma II addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch ‘Abd al-Masih I around 1683, we get a glimpse of the state and important affairs of the church of Malabar in the second half of the seventeenth century. Following is a summary of the letter:

“In the name of the Father the begetter, the Son the begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeded from the Father, three worshiped persons, one God to him be glory and upon us his mercy forever and ever Amen.

To Mar Ignatius, the saintly Catholicos, occupant of the throne of Antioch, which is the throne of Simon Cepha,<sup>172</sup> Chief of the blessed Apostles, and through Gregorius, patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, we, Tuma,

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<sup>170</sup> This letter is in my possession.

<sup>171</sup> Arabic poem in strophic form. TRANS.

<sup>172</sup> St. Peter. TRANS.

bishop of the diocese of India and the priests, deacons and faithful congregation, write this letter and deliver it with the merchant Joseph. We are desirous to see you, to learn about you and to be refreshed by our closeness to the Syrians forever.

“We would like to inform you of the dire needs of our diocese. The coming of the Patriarch Mar Gregorius unto us,<sup>173</sup> God saved us from the bondage of the Franks. Two years later he died. Two years after his death, Bishop Tuma I died too, and we, Syrians, became like sheep without a shepherd. The Franks’ oppression intensified. Because no Syrians came unto us, and we refused to accept a bishop of the heretical Franks, we priests, deacons, young and old met in one of the churches in the name of Mar Ignatius the Catholicos (sic) and Mar Gregorius the patriarch. We proclaimed Archdeacon Tuma a bishop. Afterwards, the Franks sorely oppressed us. Nevertheless, we did not submit to them.”

“Then came patriarch Andrew of Aleppo and we rejoiced by his coming and offered him due honor. He ordained me a bishop. We spent a few days together before he began to drink alcohol secretly. Later, he openly drank until his death. He drank day and night and began to hallucinate and utter words which caused people to stumble. Certainly, this was his true behavior. Therefore, my Lord, you the head of all the churches, we beseech you to send us a metropolitan with four teachers, or else, all the Syrians will be extinct. We are poor and possess no silver. But we have abundant love for the Syrians. If no Syrian will come unto us, all the Indians will join the Franks. Our enemies bribe the heathen rulers and the company (Dutch company) to oppress us and force us to join the Franks. Therefore, we ask you to respond soon to our request for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Twelve Apostles and the Syrian Fathers. We also request you to provide us with a letter of recommendation from the company which will be greatly appropriated. However, at present, we do not fear the Franks.”<sup>174</sup>

From this letter we deduce the following:

1. The author lived in the time of Mar Gregorius ‘Abd al-Jalil or shortly afterwards. He has read ‘Abd al-Jalil’s proclamation circulated to the churches of Parur, Mulanthuruthi and Kandanad in 1668. His introductory words are the same as those of ‘Abd al-Jalil’s proclamation.

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<sup>173</sup> ‘Abd al-Jalil. TRANS.

<sup>174</sup> This letter is at the Library of Chorepiscopus Malphono (doctor) Matta Konat in Pampakoda, and a copy in my possession.

2. He called the Patriarch of Antioch the occupant of the See of Simon Cepha, a Catholicos. This shows that the church of Malabar considered the Patriarch of Antioch the Catholicos himself. Consequently, it confirms what Joseph the Malabarian had said earlier. In other words, although this church was administered by bishops delegated by the Nestorian catholicos at different times, it always maintained the belief that it was subject to the See of Antioch and that the catholicos who sent those bishops is the Patriarch of Antioch.

3. It is likely that the merchant Joseph who carried this letter to the Patriarch of Antioch was a native of Beth Nahrin.<sup>175</sup>

4. The author shows that Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil died two years before the death of Bishop Tuma I, and not two days as claimed by some writers.<sup>176</sup>

5. The very words "Tuma I, bishop of India," prove that the bishops who preceded him in Malabar were Syrians who hailed from Beth Nahrin.

6. Designating Tuma II as a bishop was enunciated by the priests, deacons and the congregation as they met in one of the churches prior to the arrival of Mar Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil in Malabar. The reason is that there were no metropolitans at that time delegated by the Patriarch of Antioch to Malabar. It is contrary to the claim of some writers that 'Abd al-Jalil consecrated Tuma II a bishop assisted by Tuma I.<sup>177</sup>

7. He says that Andrew of Aleppo came to Malabar and ordained him a bishop. This means that Andrew did not ordain him but only confirmed his ordination.

8. He confirms that Andrew was an alcoholic.

9. His saying that day and night Andrew was delirious because of excessive drinking until his death. This shows that he had written this letter after Andrew's death in 1682 as shall be seen later.

10. His requesting the Patriarch of Antioch to delegate a metropolitan and four teachers lest the Syrians will soon vanish from India, proves that the church of Malabar continued to operate under the supervision of the Antiochene fathers in all generations.

Tuma II was of good conduct and always defended the orthodox faith and honored the authority of the See of Antioch. He reaped the fruits of his commendable labor by the arrival of Maphryono Yalda and Bishop Iy-

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<sup>175</sup> Mesopotamia. TRANS

<sup>176</sup> See Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 160.

<sup>177</sup> Philip. *Ibid.* 161.

awannis Hidayat Allah at Malabar who were delegated by the Apostolic See of Antioch as shall be seen later. He passed away on April 3, 1686 and was buried in the church of Niranam.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: ANDREW OF ALEPPO IN THE HISTORY OF MALABAR**

In the previous chapter, Bishop Tuma II mentioned in his letter that a clergyman named Andrew came from Aleppo to Malabar with the name of patriarch (or metropolitan), and confirmed his ordination. We have no idea who this Andrew is, and whether he was a lawful orthodox metropolitan. The history of Malabar calls him “Patriarch” but says nothing about his priestly or episcopal functions. The only available information about him is iterated only in the letter of Tuma II.

According to the chronicles of Malabar, Andrew arrived in Malabar in 1676 with his three brothers of whom one was a monk. They lived for a while in the town of Mulathuruthi. Andrew fell sick and used different drugs including alcohol. Since he found some relief drinking alcohol, he continued to drink excessively to the extent that historians called him the drunkard.<sup>178</sup> At the beginning, the steward of the church Mulanthuruthi provided him daily with alcohol. Later, the congregation resented his action considering it a repugnancy. Afterwards, Andrew obtained alcohol personally. Resenting his behavior, a group of notables met at the church of Mulanthuruthi and tried to persuade Andrew to abstain from alcohol. When he refused, they shut the door of the church in his face. Seeing that he had no peace in Mulanthuruthi, Andrew wanted to depart. Learning that he intended to leave town, Tergin Pallotonkal, then the church’s steward, asked him to pay back the amount the church spent on him since his arrival in Mulanthuruthi. Andrew swore that he had no single penny to pay, but the steward would not believe him. Finally, he took from Andrew the chalice he had brought from Syria as compensation. The chalice is still at the church of Mulathuruthi known as Syria’s Chalice.

After a while, Andrew and his brothers moved to Kallada south of Travancore. On the way his brother, the monk, passed away and was buried at the village of Gennitla. On February 19, 1682, while Andrew was bathing in the Kallada River, he was drowned and was buried in Kallada. Following his death, his brothers remained in Kallada for a while. Then they journeyed through the southern parts of the country. They returned to the north and

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<sup>178</sup> See Joseph Ittoop Ritter, *The Malabar Syrian History*, 122.

lived in the village of Kurawikangad. Finally, they settled in the village of Piravom living in one of the church's cells. Because church cells were called Sharanbi in the Malayalam language, the name of Sharanbi was stuck to them. Then, they left Piravom for Mulathuruthi. One of them married a woman from the Palasna family which had immigrated from Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) and had two sons. Later, one of them lived in a place called Trawat; the other lived closed by it. The family of the first one came to be known as Tannagat, while the other was called Kattomangad. The two families multiplied so much that most of the families in Mulanthuruthi belong to them. In time, the two brothers became stewards of the church of Mulanthuruthi. Until this day, members of these families add to their name the epithet of Sharanbi. The two families shall be discussed later.<sup>179</sup>

This is all that the history of Malabar says about Andrew and his brothers. Some of it confirms sections of the letter of Tuma II, especially that "Andrew drank day and night until his death" and that, "he remained with him only for few days"

## CHAPTER SIX: ANDREW IN THE CATHOLIC SOURCES

We have come upon a letter written against this Andrew by Dionysius Rizq Allah (Amin Khan) of Aleppo who was ordained by the papist Peter Beidin a metropolitan for the schismatic Syrians of Aleppo on April 3, 1678. It was delivered through the papist Chorepiscopus Bartholomew of Aleppo who translated it from the Garshuni (Arabic in Syriac script) into Syriac. Following is a summary of the letter.<sup>180</sup>

"We have learned that a man named Andrew has come unto you. He claimed to be a patriarch. This is absolutely false. He even raved that he was invested with the authority of ordination by the Patriarch Andrew (Akhijan) who rests in peace.<sup>181</sup> All of this account is utterly false and fabricated. This Andrew is actually from the village of Kharput. He came to Aleppo as an ordinary priest. He began to drink alcohol day and night. He quarreled with people who hated him. One day as he was drinking, he picked a fight with

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<sup>179</sup> See the biography of the two alleged bishops from the family of Kattomangad in P. M. Patros of Mulanthuruthi, 5–9.

<sup>180</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession

<sup>181</sup> Andrew Akhijan was a native of Aleppo. He was a sorcerer who spent his days in reading books of magic. His faction usurped our church of Aleppo in 1662. With him begins the patriarchate of the schismatic Syrians. See Jirjis Shahin, *Nahj Wasim*, 41–42 and Lomond, 617.

some men. They took him to court where he recanted the faith and became a Muslim. But he did not abstain from drinking. The Muslim *Naqib*<sup>182</sup> had him beaten and banished from Aleppo. This took place in the time of the late Patriarch Andrew as testified by the monk Jacob, a student of the school and the entire Syrian clergy, and by the half-deacons, deacons and the Syrian congregation of Aleppo.” Rizq Allah of Aleppo goes on to admonish them against Andrew asking them to take care of the Syrian Chorepiscopus Bartholomew of Aleppo whom he sent over to Aleppo.

The most important point in this letter is that Andrew was from Kharput and not from Aleppo as mentioned by Tuma II and by the Malabar chronicles. Andrew came to Aleppo and indulged in drinking day and night. At Malabar, he claimed to be a patriarch as mentioned by Tuma II and confirmed by the chronicles of Malabar.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE ARRIVAL OF MAPHRYONO BASILIUS YALDA AND BISHOP HIDAYAT ALLAH IN MALABAR

When the letter of Tuma II dated 1683, was received by the Patriarch of Antioch, a delegation from Malabar arrived at the Za’faran Monastery.<sup>183</sup> The delegates informed the Patriarch ‘Abd al-Masih I, of blessed memory, about the condition of the church of Malabar particularly its dire need for bishops. In 1684, the patriarch consecrated the Holy Chrism assisted by the Maphryono of the East Basilius Yalda, a native of the village of Ba Khudyada (Qaraqosh),<sup>184</sup> and a great number of the bishops subject to the See of Antioch.<sup>185</sup> In a meeting they discussed the case of the suffering church of Malabar. The good-hearted Maphryono Yalda, agreed to give up his position as Maphryono of the East and journey to Malabar to serve the church in that remote country. The assembling fathers rejoiced over his decision and showered him with praise.

Maphryono Yalda left Mardin for St. Matthews Monastery, Iraq, to prepare for his journey to Malabar. In 1685, he set out to Malabar via Basra accompanied by his brother Jumu’a and a number of monks from the Monasteries of St. Matthew and Mar Behnam. The monks included Choqa, Matta, Hidayat Allah bar Shammo of Ba Khudayda, whom Maphryono

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<sup>182</sup> Muslim head of the descendants of the Prophet of Islam. TRANS.

<sup>183</sup> Then, the seat of the Patriarch. TRANS.

<sup>184</sup> A village situated north of Mosul, Iraq. TRANS.

<sup>185</sup> According to a Za’faran MS containing hymns by Jacob of Sarug, margin 339.

Yalda ordained as bishop to assist him in the administration of the church of Malabar. He named him Iyawannis at his ordination. It is most likely that only Maphryono Yalda, Bishop Iyawannis and the monk Matta arrived in Malabar.<sup>186</sup> When they reached Tellichery, they were apprehensive because the country was still under Portuguese rule. To evade the Portuguese, they disguised themselves and traversed on foot through rugged mountains and jungles until they reached Kothamangalom. They were guided by a heathen who was tending water buffalo. For his great help, he became highly respected by the Syrians of Kothamangalom. According to the maphryono's instruction, the heathen was allotted a property and an amount of money to be expended to him annually from the treasury of St. Thomas church. His family still receives this amount every year.

Thirteen days after the group's arrival, Maphryono Yalda passed away on September 19. He had already ordained Iyawannis Hidayat Allah a metropolitan on September 14 at the festival of the Invention of the Cross. On September 20, he was buried in the church of Kothamangalom. This church still commemorates him every year with utmost reverence as crowds of faithful attend this occasion and receive blessing from his venerable tomb.<sup>187</sup> Patients visit his grave for healing. Indeed, since his death, God displayed many miracles through him to the extent that Tuma IV, the priests, deacons and the congregation of Malabar called him in their letter to the Patriarch of Antioch dated 1727, "Mar Basilius the Maphryono Saint."<sup>188</sup> During the celebration of his memory the clergymen and the parishioners circle the church three times according to their custom. They are preceded by a man from the previously mentioned heathen family carrying a torch indicating that this is how his ancestor guided the maphryono and his companions to this church.

Maphryono Yalda was born in Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh) and became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Behnam, which he, together with Rabban

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<sup>186</sup> According to the letter of Tuma IV to the Patriarch of Antioch dated September 25, 1720.

<sup>187</sup> On November 28, 1856, the priest Gurgis Konat, of the Pampakoda church, wrote to the Chorepiscopus Philip saying, "Our father, the priest Matta Konat, went in September to the church of Kothamangalom to present honor to the grave of the saintly Father Mar Basilius and returned in peace." The letter is in the possession of the Edavazhikal family. On June 12, 1927, the congregation of Kothamangalom asked the Apostolic See to canonize him as a saint. The letter to the patriarch was signed by five metropolitans.

<sup>188</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.

Gurgis, renovated in 1660.<sup>189</sup> He was ordained a maphryono by the laying on of hands of Patriarch Yeshu' II in 1674 of the Greeks/1663 A. D.<sup>190</sup> He made St. Matthew's Monastery the seat of his maphrianate. He became a counselor to the Patriarchs Jirjis II (1687–1708) and Ishaq (1709–1724), when they were still monks. He ordained them priests in 1669. These two dignitaries joined him in renovating the monastery and its church in 1673. For some reason, the Wali<sup>191</sup> cast them and maphryono Yalda into prison and had them pay a heavy fine. But later were released and returned to the monastery.

In 1675, Maphryono Yalda appointed the monk-priest Ishaq a superior of the monastery. In 1677, he ordained the monk-priest Jirjis a metropolitan for Jazirat ibn 'Umar, known as the island of Qardu, and called him Dioscorus at his ordination. In 1684, when he abdicated his Maphrianate position to journey to Malabar, he was succeeded by Metropolitan Dioscorus by the laying on of hands of Patriarch 'Abd al-Masih I.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: METROPOLITAN IYAWANNIS HIDAYAT ALLAH

Iyawannis Hidayat Allah was a distinguished church father of his time. He was born in the village of Qaraqosh near Mosul in the first half of the seventeenth century. His father was Shammo and mother, Masira. He was called Hidayat at baptism.<sup>192</sup> As a youth, he studied Syriac under the priest 'Abd al-Masih Jumu'a and mastered its principles. He was ordained a priest. Upon becoming a widower in 1661, he became a monk at the Monastery of Mar Behnam where he taught the Syriac language and graduated a number of Syrian clergymen. Then, he moved to several other monasteries.<sup>193</sup> In 1673, he became abbot of the Qatra Monastery also known as the Monas-

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<sup>189</sup> According to his testimony about his birth place in a marginal note on a Za'faran MS which contains the hymns of Mar Jacob of Sarug.

<sup>190</sup> See his correct date and insignia in a copy of the *Hodoye* (Nomocanon) of Bar Hebraeus at the private library of the notable Syrian, Na'um 'Azar in Aleppo.

<sup>191</sup> The Ottoman governor of Mosul. TRANS.

<sup>192</sup> This is according to the date of the copying of *The Order of Vigils and the Memre (metrical hymns) of the Traditions and Festivities of the Dispensation of the Lord* which shall be discussed later.

<sup>193</sup> See Patriarch Aphram Barsoum, *al-Lulu al-Manthur*, 461–472, translated into English by Matti Moosa (Passeggiata Press, 2000), reprinted with the title *The Scattered Pearls* (Gorgias Press, 2003), 515. TRANS.



tery of Strangers overlooking the Za'faran Monastery.<sup>194</sup> We have come upon a book called *The Order of Vigils and the Memre (metrical hymns) of the Traditions and Festivities of the Dispensation of the Lord* copied by Hidayat Allah completed in December, 1673 at the Monastery of Mar Yaqub (Jacob) and the Monastery of The Mother of God.<sup>195</sup> In 1685, Maphryono Yalda ordained him a metropolitan and took him along with him to Malabar.

Hidayat Allah was versed in the Syriac language. He composed in it two odes in the Ephramite (seven-syllabic) meter, in praise of the Virgin Mary,<sup>196</sup> and the second in which he satirized the papist priest Faraj Allah of Aleppo<sup>197</sup> who journeyed to Malabar with the deacon Matta, but were opposed by Hidayat Allah. They suffered the worst death.<sup>198</sup> He also composed a treatise containing general canons of the church of Malabar as a result of a council he convened at the village of Chengannur in 1997 of the Greeks/1686 A. D. which shall be discussed shortly.<sup>199</sup>

Hidayat Allah was ordained a bishop before his arrival in Malabar. He says this in the *Order of Ordinations* which he began copying in Basra and completed in Malabar.<sup>200</sup> On page 59 he says, "Written in the hand of the sinful wretch and bishop in name only, Hidayat, son of Shammo and Masira at the city of Basra in 1996 of the Greeks/1685 A. D., while we were en-route to Malabar situated in the eastern part of India." On p. 81 is written, "By the hand of the servant Hidayat at the city of Basra in 1996 of the Greeks/1685 A. D." On p. 102 is mentioned "This *Order* was completed properly and without deficiency by the hand of the sinful Hidayat who is only bishop by name in the city of Basra in 1996 of the Greeks/1685 A. D." Finally he says, "This *Order* was completed in the time of the Patriarch Mar Ignatius 'Abd al-Masih, May God honor his Patriarchal See and grants us forgiveness by his prayers. Written in 1996 of the Greeks/1685 A. D. while I, the transcriber and Catholicos (Maphryono) Yalda were en route to

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<sup>194</sup> See Aphram Barsoum, *Nuzhat al-Adhban fi Tarikh Dayr al-Za'faran* (1917), 153.

<sup>195</sup> A copy is at the private library of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat, the Malphono (most learned man and teacher) of Malabar.

<sup>196</sup> A copy is in Malabar and another in my possession.

<sup>197</sup> A copy is in Malabar owned by the monk Zechariah of Togollen of Kandadanad.

<sup>198</sup> See the *Chronicle of Angen*.

<sup>199</sup> A copy is in the possession of the Edavazhikal family and another one is in my possession.

<sup>200</sup> A copy is at the library of the Syrians of Sr. Thomas in Nairulla, Malabar.

India. I started copying it in Basra but did not finish it. I finally completed it in India at the church of Koramattom built after the martyr Mar Jirjis in 2001 of the Greeks/1690 A. D. I beseech anyone who reads it to pray for the wretched and sinful Hidayat Iyawannis, a bishop in name only. Also, pray for my parents Shammo and Masira, my brothers Dawud and Hadh Bshabba the deacon, and my sisters Sarah, Khatun and Charkass. Also, pray for Yaghmur, Ibrahim, Khushaba, Shushanna (Susana), Misra and the deacons Yalda and Yuhanna.”

At Malabar, and shortly before his death, Maphryono Yalda elevated Bishop Iyawannis to the dignity of a metropolitan.

## **CHAPTER NINE: THE STRIFE OF METROPOLITAN IYAWANNIS HIDAYAT ALLAH**

After Basilius Yalda, Metropolitan Iyawannis Hidayat took charge of church business with great efficiency. This apostolic man demonstrated outstanding ability of performance. He had also the fortitude to face problems with avid spiritual zeal and determination.

Iyawannis traveled through the country of Malabar from village to village enduring hardships. His objective was to disseminate the orthodox faith and encourage the faithful. His motto was the fear of God. Thus, he defended the church of God and its interests with his might even at the expense of his own life. With his private money he renovated some churches and built new ones. He taught the clergy the Syriac language, church rituals and jurisprudence. For this, he should be highly commended.

Moreover, Iyawannis opposed the papists<sup>201</sup> proclaiming the orthodox faith fearlessly. He disseminated orthodox dogmas including the explanation of “one catholic and apostolic church” in the Nicene Creed. He expounded the true meaning of the unity of the person and natures of Christ without admixture or confusion. He defended the dogma of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone.<sup>202</sup> He emphasized the use of leavened bread in the celebration of the Eucharist. He admonished that it was wrong to place images in the church or worship them. He asserted that the celibacy of parish priests was unlawful.<sup>203</sup> Thus, he won many, who for ig-

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<sup>201</sup> Roman Catholics. TRANS.

<sup>202</sup> Not from the Father and the Son maintained by the Church of Rome and many Protestant churches. TRANS.

<sup>203</sup> According to St. Paul in his first letter to Timothy, Chapter 3 and Titus I: 5–6, the episcopus (a bishop, a priest or overseer), should be married. For how can

norance had embraced the Roman faith, to the orthodox faith. This motivated Tuma IV, the priests, deacons and faithful to call him in their aforementioned letter as, "Mar Iyawannis the prudent bishop and defender of the law of Christ." His enemies, however, were furious and waited to seek an opportunity to trap him. But he endured their machinations with patience. He spent some nights sleeping on tree tops in order to escape his foes.

Iyawannis re-ordained lawfully the priests and deacons who had been uncanonically ordained by Tuma II.<sup>204</sup> He chose a young man from the family of Pakalomattam and taught him church rituals. He ordained him a deacon, a priest and then a Bishop for Malabar with the name of Tuma III around 1687.<sup>205</sup> When Tuma III passed away on April 9, 1688, Iyawannis ordained Tuma IV to succeed him.<sup>206</sup> After nine years of struggle and hard labor, Iyawannis Hidayat passed away on August 3, 1694 and was buried in the church of St. Thomas at Mulanthuruthi where his anniversary is still celebrated with great honor.

Metropolitan Iyawannis Hidayat left a commendable memory in the Syrian church of Malabar. We have come upon a letter in Syriac addressed by some Malabarians to the Orthodox bishops of Syria at the beginning of the eighteenth century praising his works. Among other things, the authors of the letters say, "Since Mar Iyawannis and other bishops who came to Malabar and restored us to the ancient traditions of our forefathers, we to this day, never subjected ourselves to the Franks. We unequivocally adhere to the orthodox faith, have our priests marry and observe other matters which we have forsaken because of greed."<sup>207</sup>

In their letter addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch and to Basilius, catholicos of Jerusalem (sic) in 1727, Tuma IV and the priests, deacons and the faithful of Malabar wrote, "In response to the letter of our fathers, you

he manage the church of God if he has no family to care for. For these doctrines affirmed by Iyawannis, see E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 152. TRANS.

<sup>204</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>205</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written around 1840.

<sup>206</sup> See the message of Tuma IV and the priests, deacons and faithful of Malabar to the Patriarch of Antioch in 1727, which is in my possession, and E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 152.

<sup>207</sup> This letter is at the Library of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat, the teacher of Malabar, in Pampakoda.

have sent us our father Mar Basilius the Patriarch Yalda<sup>208</sup> along with Mar Iyawannis, the prudent bishop and zealous for the law of Christ. When they arrived in Kothamangalam, Mar Basilius immediately fell sick. He ordained our father Iyawannis a metropolitan. Iyawannis preached the orthodox Syrian faith and expelled the Franks from India. Shortly afterwards, he departed us. He passed away on August 3, 2005 of the Greeks/1694 A. D.<sup>209</sup>

In his letter addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch at the end of 1747, Tuma V said, “Mar Basilius passed away sooner than expected. He proclaimed five dogmas including the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, fasting, the Eucharist, the church and the natures of Christ. Also, he permitted us to practice entire other traditions.”<sup>210</sup> In another letter Tuma V says, “When Maphryono Basilius and Metropolitan Mar Iyawannis came to Malabar in 1685, they cleansed the Frankish customs and restored the ancient traditions of our forefathers. Since then and until this day, we have never added or subtracted anything from them.”<sup>211</sup>

We read in an ancient copy of the *Sbhimo*<sup>212</sup> the following, “A Frankish metropolitan named Alexis, came to Malabar and subjugated the Syrians. He convened the Council of Udayamperur (Diamper). He annulled the Syriac rite and replaced it with the Frankish rite. Thus, the Frankish rites were used in the church until Bishop Mar Iyawannis came to Malabar. This saintly man died and was buried in the church of Mulanthuruthi. He is truly a second Mar Thomas the Apostle.”<sup>213</sup>

The Maphryono of Malabar, Basilius Shukr Allah, mentioned in his tract of 1751–1752, that the church of Mulanthuruthi commemorates Bishop Hidyat on August 3. He, likewise, celebrated his memory at this church. He also mentioned that the church of Kothamangalam commemorates Maphryono Yalda on September 20. So, he sent Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna Ba Khydaydi (of Qaraqosh) to that church to celebrate his memory because he was his relative. Furthermore, he convinced some priests to wear the clerical vestments which Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Jalil and Maphryono Yalda had brought with them to Malabar. He complained that,

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<sup>208</sup> Yalda was not a patriarch but a maphryono. TRANS.

<sup>209</sup> This letter is in my possession.

<sup>210</sup> This letter is in my possession.

<sup>211</sup> This letter is at the Library of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat, the teacher of Malabar, in Pampakoda.

<sup>212</sup> Service Book for the whole week. TRANS.

<sup>213</sup> This *Sbhimo* is at the library of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat, the teacher of Malabar.

because of their enmity toward each other, the parishioners of Mulanthuruthi squandered the money of Bishop Hidayat. He also affirmed that the church fathers that preceded him uprooted some deleterious customs the Malabarians were following. They had priests grow long beards. They committed to them the orthodox faith and instructed them to observe, as much as they could endure, the seasons of fasting and the canonical times of prayers.<sup>214</sup> The priest Philip Edavazhikal, said that Mar Iyawannis labored very hard in Malabar like St. Thomas the Apostle.<sup>215</sup>

## CHAPTER TEN: THE COUNCIL OF CHENGANUR AND ITS DECISIONS IN 1686

### The Reasons of its Convocation

In the previous chapters, we saw how at the Council of Udayampur (Diamper) in 1599, Alexis da Menezes shamefully suppressed the faith of the Syrian Church of India. He exterminated its beautiful rituals and glorious traditions and replaced them with repugnant and contrived Latin customs. The Patriarchs of Antioch had no alternative but to resist those Western customs and usages, especially that the route to India became open to the papal delegates. We have also seen earlier the commendable strife of Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil. We have specifically shown his tract concerning the dogma and tradition of the Syrian Church. Now we witness Mar Iyawannis Hidayat Allah who continued that strife particularly by assembling this council.

### The Convocation of the Council

Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil had already circulated a letter to the churches of northern Travancore and Cochin in which he affirmed the orthodox faith. Iyawannis Hidayat Allah, however, thought of convening a council under his presidency at the village of Chenganur located in the middle of the churches in southern Travancore. The delegates of fourteen churches including clergymen and laity attended.

### The Decisions of the Council

After deliberating the dogmas and traditions of the church in the past generations, and after reciting the canons of the three Ecumenical Councils<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> See *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: nos. 5, 244, 246, 249, and 251–252.

<sup>215</sup> See his tract dated May, 1854.

<sup>216</sup> Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus, TRANS

and the books of *Hodoyo* (*Nomocanon*), and *Zalge* (*The Book of Rays*) and chapters of *Mnurath Qdushe* (*The Lamp of the Sanctuaries*) by Bar Hebraeus, and the *memre* (*metrical hymns*) of St. Ephraim and Jacob of Sarug, the council endorsed some general canons to be observed by the church. The president circulated the minutes of the council to the churches in an apostolic letter prefaced with a historical prologue. Following is the translation of this letter.

**In the Name of the Eternal, the Everlasting, the Weak Iyawannis,  
bishop of the True Syrian Christians in India**

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we proceed to write down the canons which, since the time of the Apostles and saintly Fathers, were observed by the Syrian Church. Since that time and until the time of the Franks,<sup>217</sup> the Syrians observed orthodox usages.

For the last eighty years, however, the Syrians altered these usages and adopted customs of the Franks thinking they were easier to follow. Whether by force or convenience, some of them followed these customs. They succumbed to this gross error because of ignorance and lack of deliberation. But now, that is the year 1997 of the Greeks/1686 A. D., they returned to their ancient and orthodox traditions.

According to our practices, we Syrians observe five fasts except Wednesday and Friday of week days. These are Lent, the Apostles' Fast, and the Fast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the Fast of the Nativity of the Lord, and the fast of Nineveh. Lent is observed for forty-eight days; the rest of the eight days were added to it because of Passion Week during which we should subjugate our bodies, otherwise Lent would end up on the last Friday of the forty days. We do not celebrate the Holy Eucharist in Lent except on Saturdays and Sundays. No weddings or baptismal should be performed during Lent. But commemoration of martyrs should be celebrated. As to the festival of the Annunciation,<sup>218</sup> the church will celebrate it whenever it occurs. The church also celebrates the Holy Eucharist on Wednesday in mid-Lent.

The church observes the Fast of the Apostles from Monday following Pentecost to June 29 that is the festival of Peter and Paul, the Apostles.

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<sup>217</sup> Meaning the time the Portuguese arrived in India. TRANS.

<sup>218</sup> That is when Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and announced to her that she would bear a son conceived by the Holy Spirit. TRANS.

The church observes the Fast of the Mother of God from August 1 to the middle of the month that is for fourteen days. The fast of the Nativity of Christ the Redeemer is observed from the beginning of December to the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. The Fast of Nineveh is observed from Monday of the third week preceding Lent, until the morning of Thursday of the same week that is for three days.

As to the condition of fasting, the faithful should abstain from meat, eggs, fats, milk, cheese or any animal product. However, on Wednesdays and Fridays the faithful should not taste any fat food before sunset. It is even commendable not to break the fast from the evening until the morning because God first created light.

### **The Issue of the Unleavened Bread**

First, let us hear the words of Christ saying, "The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of flour until the whole was leavened." (Matthew, 13: 33). The bread which our Lord Jesus took with his hands and blessed was not unleavened but leavened. For this reason the great Ephraim the Syrian says that, "As the body is devoid without the soul which dwells in it, so is the unleavened bread devoid of the descent of the Holy Spirit."

St. Jacob (of Sarug) says "Today, whoever offers a lamb as a sacrifice is worse than a heathen. So is the one who offers on the altar a lamb in the form of unleavened bread. Indeed, he who offers a lamb in the form of unleavened bread has, in fact, blasphemed the Father who offered his Son a sacrifice."

Again, St Ephraim says, "Far better off for us to take a lethal poison which only destroys the body than offer unleavened bread and pure wine at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist." The pure wine in this context is the wine not mixed with water. In fact, half of the cup should be of wine and the other half of wine mixed with water. The reason is that both blood and water flowed from the side of the crucified Christ. So, he who offers unleavened bread is a Jew as St. Ephraim says.

As to the parable of the yeast, the woman symbolizes the divinity (of Christ); the yeast symbolizes Christ who kneaded himself on behalf of the three tribes of Noah. He leavened them and brought them back from idols worship. The theologian,<sup>219</sup> in his second discourse on the Son (Christ) said, "Man will be sanctified if he becomes like yeast which leavens the whole

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<sup>219</sup> Gregory Nazianzen. TRANS.

batch, and unites himself with Christ who was totally rejected in order to save him from being cast away.”

The Eucharistic bread should be made of flour, water, yeast, salt and olive oil which signify the mystery of Christ. Indeed, the body of Christ is composed of the four elements and a rational soul. Thus, the flour resembles the dust, water resembles water, the yeast resembles air, salt resembles fire, and olive oil resembles the soul. In fact, after God made Adam of dust, he breathed into him the breath of life.

Again, salt denotes love, yeast the Word and the olive oil, the mercy of God. As the dove carried olive branches to announce the end of the Deluge, and as the children received Christ carrying olive branches, and the wounds of the man who fell among thieves were healed by olive oil. Salt is good because every sacrifice is salted as the Gospel of St. Mark says (Mark 9: 49).

Again, the olive oil is a remedy of our wounds (of sin). Observe what David said, “I am like an olive in the house of God.” In fact, in the Old Testament the sacrifices were also anointed with oil.

Again, the yeast denotes the true faith. As the yeast permeates the batch and offers it its taste, so does Christ, through faith, draws all unto him according to his saying, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12: 32). The oil indicates hope. Since we live in a body susceptible to suffering, and it is possible that suffering can have power over it, we add yeast to the bread because it is more palatable than the unleavened dough.

Again, the yeast denotes the growth of the body of the Word of God. For as the yeast increases the volume of the batch of dough, thus the Word grew in body while he is perfect in his eternity and needs no growth.

Furthermore, the yeast symbolizes the union of the soul with the body. The salt placed in the flour denotes the mind which the Word took in the Incarnation. Job said, “Can the insipid food be eaten without salt?”<sup>220</sup> See that he calls the unleavened insipid because it became worthless and cannot be eaten after the promulgation of the Gospel message. Moreover, the Lord said, “Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.” (Mark 9: 49). The term “Every” in this case is comprehensive. Thus, those who offer the sacrifice (Holy Eucharist) with unleavened bread which has no salt do not in fact offer a consummate body (of Christ).

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<sup>220</sup> Job 6: 6. TRANS.



Therefore, dear brethren and children, cast away the times of error and walk straight in perfection according to the call in which you have been called.

### **From the Canons of Patriarch Quryaqos**

No bishop or priest is permitted by God to say the Mass twice in one day. Nor is he allowed to celebrate the Mass twice in one day on the same altar or *tablitho*.<sup>221</sup>

The priest or deacon who has not fulfilled the nocturnal prayer is not permitted to enter the altar but takes the Holy Communion at its entrance.

No priest is allowed to celebrate the Holy Eucharist without a deacon.

Priests and deacons should not enter the altar barefooted but wear clean shoes. Better still, they should have special slippers made for this purpose.

Speaking with a Jew or a pagan before partaking in the Holy Communion is not allowed. Nor should adversaries take the Communion before they have reconciled with each other.

### **The Third Canon of the Council of Nicaea**

The cleric is not permitted to live with a woman unless she is his mother, sister, aunt or remote relative provided that they are under no suspicion.

### **A Canon of Basilios the Great**

I do not permit a celibate cleric to live with a woman even though he was seventy years of age. As for you, better drive that woman out of your house.

### **The Eighth Canon of Addai (Thadeus) the Apostle**

Let the Gospel be read at the end of the readings of the Scriptures that is after the Prophets and the Acts of the Apostles as a conclusion to them. At its reading, the people should be standing. The reader of the Epistles and the Gospel should turn westward in order for the congregation to hear him.

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<sup>221</sup> The *tablitho* is a rectangular board made either of wood, marble or special stone. It is placed in the middle of the Table of Offering and covered by a cloth. On it is inscribed a Holy Cross with the statement that the *tablitho* is sanctified by the Holy Trinity. It also bears the name of the celebrant who consecrated it with the Holy Chrism. The Syrian Church maintains that the *tablitho* is necessary for offering the Sacraments of Bread and Wine. TRANS.

Also, we anticipate meeting Christ coming from the East because his glad tiding is light. The light emanates from the East and lightens the world.

### **Another Canon of Addai the Apostle**

During worship in the church, chant the praises of David daily.

### **From the Canons of Yuhanna (John) of Thella**

The Old and the New Testaments should be read on Sunday even though only one priest is present.

Priests and deacons should stay in the church at night to protect their virginity. As to the married priest of one wife, that is if he married when he was a deacon and before becoming a priest, if his wife is still alive he is not to blame if he slept at night in his house during the days other than those of his duty to serve. He should sleep in the church during that week and perform his service with fervor. He who disobeys shall be divested from the priesthood.

Any priest, whether in a city or village, who is not sick and does not attend the service on time with his mates, should be deprived of the priesthood. Deacons and half-deacons should persevere in prayer and service.

All clergy, be they priests or deacons, should not neglect the times of prayers and chanting of the Psalms day and night. (St. Paul). Every faithful man or woman should bathe when rising from sleep. They should pray before engaging in work. The lay people should pray thrice as David said, “As for me, I will call upon God and the Lord shall save me evening, and morning and at noon.”<sup>222</sup>

The priest or deacon who marries the second time shall be dropped from his dignity. If he committed adultery, he shall be completely discarded.

### **The Sixteenth Canon of the Apostles**

He who marries twice after his baptism, or takes a concubine should not be introduced into the order of the priesthood.

### **The Seventeenth Canon of the Apostles**

Anyone accused of adultery, or who commits an abominable act and is rebuked for it, should not hold any priestly rank. The same applies to the drunkard. However, the priest is allowed to drink three leveled cups in ban-

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<sup>222</sup> Psalm 55: 16–17. TRANS.

quets held in the houses of the faithful because the universal Church seeks those who are without reproach.

### **The Fourteenth Canon of the Apostles**

The cleric, who neglects other clerics and does not teach them the fear of God, should be removed from office.

Now then, beloved sons, I say to you as St. Paul said, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."<sup>223</sup> And "I consider that all the present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."<sup>224</sup> This is so because we call the Father "Our Father" and we are called brothers of Christ and partakers of the Holy Spirit. Glory is to God and upon us his mercy. Amen.

Here ends the letter written down at the Council of Chenganur in the year 1997 of the Greeks/1686 A. D., in the presence of the delegates of the fourteen churches of southern Malabar. Also, in the presence of the wretched Bishop Iyawannis who hailed from the country of Nineveh for the sake of the Syrians.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN: TUMA IV AND GABRIEL THE NESTORIAN**

On April 9, 1688, Tuma III passed away and was buried in Kadampanad. Immediately after his death, Metropolitan Iyawannis Hidayat ordained Tuma IV a bishop.<sup>225</sup> This was confirmed by the letter Tuma IV and a group of Indian priests, deacons and laymen of Malabar and Angamali addressed in 1727 to the Patriarch of Antioch Shukr Allah (1723–1745) and to Basilios, catholicos of Jerusalem (sic). According to this letter, "Metropolitan Mar Tuma received the dignity of the episcopate from Metropolitan Iyawannis who came to India in the company of the pious Maphryono Basilios."<sup>226</sup> This was further confirmed by Tuma V in a letter addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch Jirjis III (1745–1768) at the church of Pallikara around 1747.<sup>227</sup>

In 1708 or 1709, the Nestorian Catholicos Iliyya (Elijah) X sent Gabriel of 'Ayn Kawa, bishop of Azerbaijan, to Malabar probably to entice the Syrians of Malabar to join the Church of Rome. In order to interfere in

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<sup>223</sup> 1 Corinthians 15: 19. TRANS.

<sup>224</sup> Romans 8: 18. TRANS.

<sup>225</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 152.

<sup>226</sup> This letter is in my possession.

<sup>227</sup> This letter is in my possession.

the affairs of these Syrians, Gabriel, before his departure, thought of obtaining a document from Rome to use as a means of deceiving them. In 1704, he submitted his concession of faith to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide. The Congregation praised his faith and urged him to endorse the document of faith issued by Pope Urban VIII to the people of the East. Gabriel refused to take the document, but only armed himself with the letter of the Congregation to him and journeyed to Malabar. Upon his arrival in that country, he began to interfere in the affairs of the Syrians who were subject to Rome. But he was confronted by the Papal Deputy Angelo the Carmelite, bishop of Metilopolis, who opposed him and had him expelled. Gabriel had no alternative but to sign a covenant at the church of Changanacherry on October 5, 1712. It contained the following, "I, the wretched, Metropolitan Gabriel hold the faith of the Holy Roman Church and submit to his Holiness the Pope of Rome and his Deputy Angelo, metropolitan of Metilopolis and his clergy the Carmelite friars. I agree to live like an estranged bishop away from his diocese. I shall use unleavened bread in the Eucharist, observe the fasts, festivals and all other customs of those (Syrians) subject to the authority of Rome in these countries."<sup>228</sup> This covenant is still preserved in the archives of Verapoly.<sup>229</sup> Gabriel's covenant displeased those Syrians who intended to cast away the yoke of Rome and thus shunned him. In 1716, he renounced the covenant he made and pretended to be a Nestorian. The Congregation de Propaganda Fide issued a decree in 1722 confirming that Gabriel was a Nestorian who intended to deceive the people of Malabar.<sup>230</sup>

Having renounced association with the faith of Rome, Gabriel attempted to mend fences with the Syrians pretending that he was orthodox. His actual purpose was to kindle the fire of sedition hoping to win some of them to his side. Trusting his claim, Tuma welcomed him and handed him a copy of the profession of faith and the canons of the church and its rituals for his observation. Gabriel signed the profession of faith and delivered it to Tuma. He said, "I will be a Syrian (orthodox) until death. I believe that the Virgin Mary is the Mother of God. I hold One Nature of the Incarnate Christ and accept only the first three Ecumenical Councils."<sup>231</sup> I condemn the heretics including Eutychus, Deodore, Theodore, Nestorius and Hiba

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<sup>228</sup> A copy of this covenant is in my possession.

<sup>229</sup> Philip, 153.

<sup>230</sup> A copy is in my possession.

<sup>231</sup> That is, the Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus. TRANS.

(Ibas). I further condemn the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo<sup>232</sup> and all who confessed Two Nature in Christ after their union in the Incarnation. I accept all the saintly fathers<sup>233</sup> and submit to the authority of Mar Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch, who rules over us today. I will behave according to the commands of the Bishop Mar Tuma IV and will not change anything in the church canons he handed to me, or any rite performed according to the customs of the Syrians. Or else, I will be condemned by the Holy (Syrian) Church.”<sup>234</sup>

As Gabriel came to know the Syrians well and gained strength, he began to interfere in their church affairs and spew out the venom of his Nestorian heresy. He turned against Tuma criticizing the validity of his ordination as bishop. As a result, conflict intensified between the two men. Some priests who supported Tuma kept reminding him that he was not a lawful bishop. After prolonged controversies Gabriel and Tuma separated. Gabriel went to live in southern Travancore using Kottayam, the gate of that region, as the center of his activity. Tuma went eastward to Kandanad.<sup>235</sup>

In his letter to the Patriarch Jirjis III of Antioch written around 1747, Tuma V mentioned the reason of this conflict. He said, “In 1708, came to this country a metropolitan named Gabriel by order of the Catholicos Iliyya (Elijah). He proclaimed to us the doctrine of Two Natures and Persons in Christ. For this reason, conflict intensified between him and my uncle. Some Syrian parishioners and Franks joined him. Sometimes, Gabriel celebrated the Holy Eucharist with leavened and also with unleavened bread. But he observed fasting according to the Syrian custom, and the celebration of the Eucharist like the Franks. Because there was no bishop to succeed him, his followers returned to their ancient customs.”<sup>236</sup>

In conclusion, Tuma IV recognized Gabriel as non-orthodox. He mentioned this fact in his letter addressed to Patriarch Ishaq of Antioch (1709–1724) in 1720 and in his letter addressed to Patriarch Shukr Allah in 1727. He even petitioned the Dutch Commodore of Cochin to banish him from his diocese. But the Dutch Orientalist Carlos tried to reconcile the two men much to Tuma’s objection.

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<sup>232</sup> Bishop of Rome. TRANS.

<sup>233</sup> The non-Chalcedonian fathers. TRANS.

<sup>234</sup> This profession of faith is in my possession.

<sup>235</sup> See the tract of Patriarch Shukr Allah in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7, no. 5: 249–250.

<sup>236</sup> This letter is at the Library of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat in Pampakoda and a copy in my possession.

## CHAPTER TWELVE: TUMA IV AND THE APOSTOLIC SEE

In 1720, Tuma IV addressed a letter to Patriarch of Antioch, (Ishaq), beseeching him to send bishops to Malabar. He had it delivered by the Dutch Commodore Nederdeon on a war ship bound for Amsterdam. But the letter fell into the hands of some people in Europe and did not reach the patriarch. Following is a summary of it:

“I, the wretched Mar Tuma V, bishop over the Syrians of India, write to Mar Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch.

In the name of the Almighty and Everlasting God, Tuma the wretched bishop of the Syrian Orthodox in the India of St. Thomas, to him who occupies the Throne of Peter, Chief of the Apostles.

O Father of fathers and Shepherd of shepherds, who rules over the famous and resplendent See of Antioch in the four corners of the earth. You are the Patriarch and Head of the entire Church of Christ as was decreed by the three hundred and eighteen fathers who met at the city of Nicaea. You are the steward of God and in control of every dignity in the Apostolic Church. Thus, with your wisdom you tend the sheep of the Eastern diocese. And when one of them is lost you immensely grieve. But when you find him, you rejoice. Therefore, I beseech you to bless me with your right hand which is full of grace. I hear and obey whatever you may order with submission to your fatherly authority. May God bless your See forever and ever. Amen

I am unworthy to write to your highness. But I dared to write and sent this letter because of the needs of the Syrians in India. We beseech you to send us a delegation of a patriarch, metropolitan, priests and learned men well versed in the Scriptures. In fact, some time ago came to this country Mar Gregorius V, patriarch of Jerusalem, followed by Andrew of Aleppo, who was followed by Maphryono Basilius the Catholicos, and with him Metropolitan Iyawannis and monk Matta. After their death, however, we remained braving the billows of the sea like a ship without a rudder. Now, if you send us someone to help, certainly Jesus Christ will help you as God the Father helped the children of Israel. You will also be comforted by the Holy Spirit.

In 1709, came to this country, as it was assumed, a metropolitan named Gabriel of Nineveh. He was sent, as was alleged, by the Catholicos Iliyya (Elijah). He maintained that in Christ were Two Natures and Two Persons. For this reason we did not accept him except for one priest named Patikotel and a few Romish Franks. We would like to inform you that we have no sufficient knowledge to refute them. Indeed, our dear friend the learned Dutch Orientalist and expert philosopher, Carlos, who resides in

the old fortress of Amsterdam in Holland, asked both of us to be of one mind. We said to him that we shall inform the Patriarch of Antioch about this matter.

Therefore, we beseech you to lend a full ear for the love of God. We also beseech you to write to the commodore who resides at the fortress of Cochin, and who is subject to the king of India, instructing him to help us against our enemies and against the pagan rulers. We further beseech you to intercede with the venerable king (president) of the Dutch Company because he is just and answers the petition of the poor and gives everyone his worth. He is not the only one who behaves benevolently, but so are all members of this clan. All of them recognize Antioch and despise Rome.

O Mar Ignatius the Illuminator, we beseech you to take care of these matters. Pray to the Beloved Father, the Merciful Christ, the Compassionate Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mother of God, and all the male and female Saints, that we may be blessed by your supplication. Amen.

Written on September 25, 1720 at the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle in the town of Parur.”<sup>237</sup>

Having given a summary of this letter, we pose the following observations:

1) The author calls himself Bishop Tuma V. We know that Tuma V headed the church since 1728 in which Tuma IV passed away. Therefore, the designation of V is a copyist distortion. Considering himself the fifth bishop in India may mean that he counted Mar Iyawannis Hidayat as one of these five bishops.

2) The author, like his predecessors, calls those who followed Rome as “Franks and Romans” Indeed, they were called so since they seceded from the Syrian Church and joined the European Franks.

3) He declares the established fact that the Patriarch of Antioch is the head of all of the Christian church and specifically administers the Eastern diocese. He also shows that the church of India has never been subject to another leader. Consequently, he confirms the belief of his predecessors, especially Yusuf of Malabar, concerning this important point. For this reason, none followed Gabriel the Nestorian except one orthodox priest and a few Franks. And when the Dutch Orientalist Carlos asked Tuma IV to heed his advice, Tuma said that he should first seek the opinion of the Patriarch

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<sup>237</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession. Assemani published it in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 4: 464 in the Library of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide. A summary of this letter is in E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 154.

of Antioch. It is most surprising to see that the Chaldean priest Butrus Nasri deliberately drops these matters from the letter when he published it.<sup>238</sup>

As to the author's statement that "in 1709 Gabriel came to Malabar," it proves that Gabriel did not see Tuma IV in this year but long afterwards, as we have already seen. Thus, the claim that Tuma addressed a letter to Patriarch Ishaq in 1709 against Gabriel is of no consequence because the first letter he delivered against him was in 1720.

When Tuma lost hope of receiving a reply from the Patriarch of Antioch, he addressed another letter to him and to Basilius, Catholicos of Jerusalem (sic) in 1727.<sup>239</sup> But its fortune was no better than the first one. Following is a summary of this letter.

"Since the time of the Apostle Thomas, church fathers were sent unto us by you to preach. But the Franks were in control of the country. They sowed tares and bribed rulers. They handed our fathers repugnant customs. All this is because they possessed authority and power. But when Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil, that able malphono (teacher) and prudent skipper came to us, our fathers were encouraged by his presence and became established in the (orthodox) faith. 'Abd al-Jalil lived until 1671 and passed away on Friday April 14. He was buried in the church of Parur. Now we commemorate his death and hold a banquet for the congregation of the church in which he was buried and celebrate his memory."

"Then, in reply to the letter of our fathers, you sent us Mar Basilius the Patriarch (sic) Yalda with Mar Iyawannis the wise bishop and zealous for the law of Christ. As they arrived in Kothamangalam, Mar Basilius fell ill. He consecrated Mar Iyawannis, who remained with us, a metropolitan. Iyawannis continued to proclaim the orthodox faith and expelled the Franks from India. Shortly afterwards, he won the divine honor and passed away on August 3, 2005 of the Greeks/1694 A. D."

"Now hailed Gabriel from Jerusalem and told us that he was delegated by Iliyya (Elijah) Catholicos of Nineveh and Jerusalem (sic). We saw with him three letters addressed to the towns of Kollam, Parur and Kikokollam stating that there are Two Natures and Two Persons in Christ. Because of

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<sup>238</sup> See Butrus Nasri, *Dhakbirat al-Adhhan*, 2: 263.

<sup>239</sup> Apparently, ancient Malabarians confused the dignity of a Patriarch with that of Catholicos and Bishop. Likewise, in their letters they confuse Nineveh with Babylon, Antioch and Jerusalem. This is because of the influence of the Nestorians who entered their country acting in the name of the See of Antioch while they were Nestorians, as has been already shown.



this statement of faith, the Indians became divided. Gabriel also intended to unite the two groups that is the Syrians and the Franks, but did not reveal his secret to anyone. He even would have no one see the letters in his possession. However, some of our people saw them secretly and inquired about the difference between the One and the Two Natures. We, therefore, beseech you to send us fathers to teach us the ancient traditions because we are deficient of learning.”

The most important thing to be noticed about this letter is that, 1) It was not signed by Tuma (IV) alone but by priests, deacons and lay men too. 2) It serves the best evidence that Tuma IV had received the ordination as a metropolitan from Mar Iyawannis Hidayat. 3) It proves that the See of Antioch was the head of the Indian church since the time of the Apostle Thomas up to the time the Franks controlled it. 4) It is the only testimony that Maphryono Yalda promoted Bishop Hidayat to the dignity of a metropolitan shortly before his death. 5) It also shows that the Nestorians had no center in Malabar as is clear from the prevarication of Gabriel. Indeed, Gabriel could not even declare his Nestorianism openly, or promulgate the letter of his catholicos whom he describes as the Catholicos of Nineveh and Jerusalem. This establishes the fact that the intervention of the Nestorians in the affairs of Malabar was recent. 6) It proves that Tuma VI upheld the orthodox dogma and that he professed the primacy of the See of Antioch over the Indian church.

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE ZEAL OF TUMA IV FOR THE FAITH

Although Tuma IV was not well versed in the orthodox dogma, still he protected the belief of One Nature of Christ as was shown by his letter to the Apostolic See. It chanced that a Dutch master, named John Henricus desired to establish amicable relations with Tuma. He addressed to him a letter on December 10, 1713 but received no response. He addressed a second letter in 1718 stating his profession of faith that in Christ there were Two Natures and One Person. Henricus requested him to send a copy of the Gospels in order to collate it with his own copy. Tuma responded and sent a copy of his reply to the Patriarch of Antioch translated by John Henricus into Syriac.<sup>240</sup>

The historian of Malabar, E. M. Philip, mentioned that Mar Tuma had sent to Europe a letter in 1714 containing his belief in One Nature of Christ

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<sup>240</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

and affirmed that the church of Malabar continuously received bishops from the See of Antioch.<sup>241</sup>

About this time, the Dutch master Carlos, presented Tuma IV with a gift of a book coated with gold base accompanied by a Syriac letter inquiring about his belief. Carlos was an Orientalist knowledgeable of the Syriac language. Tuma replied with a letter in Syriac of which we give the following summary:

“In the name of the Almighty and Eternal. Tuma, the wretched, Fifth Bishop in India, to Carola Carolaous of sweet agnomen and beautiful name, and the beloved and famous wise man full of divine knowledge. Your letter reached me coated in a gold base and made me extremely glad. Those among us who know Syriac shared my joy. Please convey my greetings to the great king who is called the Company.<sup>242</sup> I also beseech you to read this letter to him and translate it to him perfectly. I continually pray God to protect the kingdom of the Company. Also, please convey my greetings to my friend the Commodore Nederdeon because he labored immensely on my behalf suffering great sea and other perils. Therefore, I keep remembering him in my prayers. May the Almighty God bless him, his father and mother, his wife, his sons and daughters, his sisters, his relatives and the land in which he lives.

O Carolaous! The famous master and well versed in the language of the true Syrians. I am writing to you about the faith handed to me by the fathers who were sent by Mar Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch. I am here answering what you have asked me regarding our teaching and the services according to our holy canons. If, then, you intend to inquire about Christ, we maintain that he is of One Nature and One Person compounded of Two Natures and Persons. He is perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. Thus, Christ is of Two and not in Two (natures). He is one by name, word, action, behavior, and by what is tangible and intangible.”<sup>243</sup>

The zeal of Tuma IV for the orthodox faith is also shown in the *systatikon* (letter of commendation) he provided the priests and deacons with upon their ordination, as follows:

“In the name of the Everlasting and Eternal God.

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<sup>241</sup> Philip, 153, note 4 referring to Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, II: 384–385. This book is by James Hough. It was published 2 Vols. (London: R. V. Seely and W. Burnside, 1839. TRANS.

<sup>242</sup> Tuma must be here referring to the President of the Dutch Company. TRANS.

<sup>243</sup> A deficient copy is in my possession.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One true God.

Bishop Tuma would like to inform the sons of the church of Chenganur, and the priest, the periodeutes (visiting presbyter), the deacons and the faithful, that by the grace of God, Gurgis has accepted the rank of a Psalter.<sup>244</sup> He should be accepted by the church and serve in it. No one should antagonize him or hate him. His teacher should take care of him and instruct him in order to receive a higher position. I have ordained him on the premise that he is a Syrian by faith, that he professes the Trinity and maintains that one of its persons (Christ) came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. He is one in his divinity and humanity. He is perfectly of One Nature, a compound of Two Natures without division. To him be glory and upon us his mercy and compassion forever. Amen. Our Father which art in heaven, etc.”<sup>245</sup>

Obviously, Tuma IV preserved the orthodox faith and opposed Gabriel the Nestorian until his death. In 1728, he wrote to the president of the Dutch Company asking him to provide him with orders to the governors of the Cochin citadel (fortress) to rescue the Syrians from the Franks. He related to him the episode of how the Portuguese had Mar Ignatius of Antioch drowned in the sea, and how the Syrians met at Mattancheri on the eastern coast of Cochin and swore not to follow the Franks. Consequently, God immediately had the Portuguese perish by the hands of the Dutch. Moreover, he mentions the letter he addressed to Master Carlos.<sup>246</sup>

About this time, Tuma visited the church at Mulanthuruthi and ordained a priest. Then, he fell ill. When his illness worsened, groups from thirteen churches in Kandanaḍ transferred him to Kandarna to discuss the future of the church. They realized that Gabriel was Nestorian who twisted their customs and deceived them in order to follow the Nestorian doctrine.<sup>247</sup> On March 13, 1728, Tuma passed away and was buried in the church at Kandanaḍ. On December 15, 1937, his epitaph was inscribed on a marble slab placed on his grave. It read thus in Syriac followed by Malayalam, “Metropolitan Tuma IV of the family of Pakalomattam passed away on March 13, 1728 and is buried here.”

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<sup>244</sup> This is the lowest rank of the office of the deaconate. TRANS.

<sup>245</sup> A copy of this letter is my possession.

<sup>246</sup> A copy is my possession.

<sup>247</sup> See the tract of Maphryono Shukr Allah of Aleppo in the *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: n. 5, 250.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN: TUMA V

Shortly before the death of Tuma IV in 1728, the priests, deacons and lay men assembled in Kandarna to elect a successor. Some of them chose the monk Tuma whom Tuma IV had invested with the monastic habit. Others chose Tuma, nephew of Tuma IV. Finally, they all agreed on having the latter ordained (a bishop), and informed Tuma IV of their decision. But since Tuma IV was seriously ill, they said, "We should carry you down to the church. The monk Tuma will celebrate the Holy Eucharist and you will lay your hands on him on your nephew." Tuma IV said that this was not right. He rejoined, "If I did this, the people will say that the monk (Tuma) has ordained him a bishop." No sooner had he finished these words than he sank into a coma. When he regained consciousness they brought him a book.<sup>248</sup> He sat in his chair while the monk Tuma began reading. But Tuma IV lapsed into another coma. Immediately, one of the priests took the miter off his head and placed it on the head of his nephew (Tuma) and proclaimed him a bishop. Two hours later Tuma IV passed away. His nephew, Tuma, told the assembled priests that he wanted to address a letter to the churches about his ordination, but did not know by what title he should sign. One of them, the priest Abraham, told him to sign as Chorepiscopus. But since no one knew what Chorepiscopus is, they began to argue with one another. Many of them refused to kiss his hand.<sup>249</sup> Tuma appealed to the raja who responded by dispatching a contingent of soldiers to force the priests to kiss Tuma's hand. Meantime, the Nestorian Gabriel sent a message to Tuma asking him to come unto him in order to ordain him a bishop, but Tuma refused.<sup>250</sup>

Tuma, now styled Tuma V, was very much concerned about the validity of his ordination.<sup>251</sup> Nevertheless, he was zealous for the orthodox faith and kept on challenging the papists (Catholics) and the Nestorians. This is evident from his letters addressed to the president of the Dutch Company in Cochin. In one of these letters written in 1729, he said, "In Christ there is but One Nature and One Person, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the

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<sup>248</sup> Order of Ordination. TRANS.

<sup>249</sup> This is a tradition indicating respect for the dignity of bishop. TRANS.

<sup>250</sup> See the tract of Maphryono Skukr Allah in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7, no. 5, 250 and the letter of Patriarch Jirjis III addressed to Tuma V dated August 21, 2064 of the Greeks/1753 A. D.

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Father.<sup>252</sup> In the celebration of the Eucharist we only offer new bread baked on the same day. Also, there is a difference between us and the Nestorians in observing the fast.” The Company’s chaplain answered that the two bishops Gabriel and Tuma are heretics. Gabriel is a Nestorian and Tuma, a Eutychian (sic), and that the only way to save them and their church is to invite them to profess Protestantism. Tuma wrote from Kandanad on February 11, 1730, that he could not furnish a reply “until he had received permission from the Patriarch.”<sup>253</sup>

In 1729, 1732 and 1733, John Henricus Schaff addressed to Tuma V three long letters, but Tuma did not respond. Again, he addressed to him from the great city of Amsterdam on September 15, 1739, a fourth letter reminding him of the former three letters. He asked him to attach to his reply to the story of St. Thomas and of the Franks in Syriac. He also told him that if he wished, he could send a letter through him to the Patriarch of Antioch.<sup>254</sup> This entire correspondence was communicated in the Syriac language which Tuma V was unable to speak.<sup>255</sup>

The Syrians (of India) were not pleased with the ordination of Tuma V a bishop. They complained against him to the president of the Dutch Company that his ordination was invalid.<sup>256</sup> As Tuma himself was doubtful about his ordination, he endeavored to have a bishop sent by Antioch to confirm his ordination. In 1730, Gabriel the Nestorian fell ill. When Tuma heard of his illness he went to see him. But before he reached Kottayam in 1731, Gabriel was already dead. At his deathbed was master (teacher) Matta whom Tuma IV had mentioned in his letter to the Patriarch of Antioch in 1720. When Gabriel died, Matta fearing Tuma, presented a letter, allegedly written by Gabriel saying, “I, with my full consent have granted the dignity of the episcopate to Tuma.” He placed the forged letter in Gabriel’s hand and declared, “See, this letter was in the hand of the deceased.” He gave it to Tuma who immensely rejoiced upon receiving it.<sup>257</sup> Gabriel was buried in the lesser church at Kottayam. Soon afterwards, the congregation dese-

<sup>252</sup> And not from the Father and the Son as the Roman Catholics say. TRANS.

<sup>253</sup> Philip, *the Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 155.

<sup>254</sup> This letter is in my possession.

<sup>255</sup> See the tract by the Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi of Aleppo in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 103

<sup>256</sup> *The History of Angen*

<sup>257</sup> See the tract by Maphryono Shukr Allah in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 251.

crated his grave and built with its stones a staircase for the church's cell.<sup>258</sup> Only two or probably four churches did endorse Gabriel.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN: TUMA V AND IYAWANNIS YUHANNA 'ARAQCHINCHI

In order to have peace of mind, Tuma V corresponded with the Patriarch of Antioch requesting him to send fathers and learned men to Malabar. He also asked him to provide them with Holy Chrism in order to confirm his ordination.<sup>259</sup> Concerning the journey of the delegates to India, Tuma V elicited the assistance of an Indian Jewish merchant named Ezekiel who traded with the Middle East. In 1746, Patriarch Jirjis III entrusted the diocese of Malabar to Metropolitan Iyawannis Yuhanna son of the deacon Shahin, son of Shammo of Amid (Diyarbakir), nicknamed the 'Araqchinch. Iyawannis Yuhanna and his brother 'Abd al-Karim had become monks at the Za'faran Monastery. But in 1727 they moved to Mar Matta's Monastery (St. Matthew's Monastery near Mosul, Iraq), and then returned to the Za'faran Monastery. In 1740, Yuhanna was ordained a metropolitan by Patriarch Shukr Allah who called him Iyawannis at his ordination. In 1743, he was appointed a superior of St. Matthew's Monastery. Meantime, he journeyed to Ethiopia. In 1749, Patriarch Jirjis III ordained Yuhanna's brother, 'Abd al-Karim, a metropolitan for the Patriarchal Office and called him Athanasius at his ordination.<sup>260</sup>

Enroute to India, Iyawannis Yuhanna was accompanied by the Jewish merchant Ezekiel from Basra to Malabar on board of the ship which belonged to the deacon Anton, son of the priest Sim'an (Simon), who traded with India.

Iyawannis Yuhanna was rough and hot tempered. As soon as he landed in Malabar, he was visited by Tuma V. Tuma became disappointed when he learned that he did not have with him authorization from the patriarch to canonize his ordination. Iyawannis Yuhanna went on visiting the churches and smashing the images of saints which have been planted by the Latins rebuking those who worshiped them. Thus, he was called The Iconoclast.

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<sup>258</sup> Philip, 153.

<sup>259</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar dated about 1840.

<sup>260</sup> See their biographies by Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 6: 265–267 and 7: 137–138.

While residing at the church of Mulanthuruthi, many deacons studied under him; most notable of them was Abraham of the Kattomangad family who shall be discussed shortly. He ordered the priests to wear black caps.<sup>261</sup> He ordained priests and forbade those who violated Syrian traditions and canons from becoming priests. He was so strict that Tuma V and the people repulsed him; especially that he did not consult with them about his actions. One time, Iyawannis Yuhanna addressed a letter to a supporter saying, "You should be informed of the things which happened to us by the unbelievers who antagonize us daily. Lately, they appealed to the pagan king (raja) who forbade the faithful from worshipping in the church. I am alone here and do not know their language. But I intend to see the governor. So, as soon as you receive this letter join me in order to go and see him together."<sup>262</sup>

Iyawannis Yuhanna moved to the church of Mamalcheri which sank in debt since he moved to it. It also came under the authority of the governors. Based on Dutch documents, the *Travancore State Manual* 2: 205, mentions that Iyawannis, "Found the Syrians in total ignorance living like beasts. He requested some funds in order to recruit clergymen from Antioch. He rejoined that the government of Cochin arrested him for embezzling the money of three or four churches." Tuma wrote against him to the Patriarch of Antioch asking him to delegate a maphryono to Malabar. To the letter, he attached a brief historical account about the church of Malabar. However, the *Travancore State Manual* mentioned two letters: one sent by Tuma V in 1748 to the Roman Catholic leaders consenting to join Rome provided that the Syrians are allowed to use leavened bread in the Eucharist. The second letter, dated 1760, is a negative reply to the first one.<sup>263</sup>

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN: A SUMMARY OF THE LETTER OF TUMA V TO THE SEE OF ANTIOCH

"In 52 A. D., St. Thomas came to India. He baptized many people, established five churches and appointed administrators from two ancient families. He died and was buried in Mylapore. In 345, a merchant named Tuma came to India by order of the Holy and catholic church accompanied by priests, deacons and faithful. They led a righteous life and became heads of the Indian dioceses with the rank of archdeacons. They are the ones who

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<sup>261</sup> See the *History of Angen*.

<sup>262</sup> This letter is in my possession.

<sup>263</sup> *Travancore State Manual*, 2: 205.

received the laying on of hands of St. Thomas. In 828, a merchant named Ayyub (Job) came to India with two Syrian Orthodox bishops. Indeed, until 1545, we were Syrian Orthodox abiding by our customs. Afterwards, a bishop named Abraham came by order of the Catholicos Iliyya (Elijah) bringing with him too many books. Because we had no bishops then, we received ordination from him. At that time a Portuguese king (governor) was ruling the citadel of Cochin. He had Abraham imprisoned. Abraham journeyed to Rome and was granted order by the pope to rule over the whole Indian diocese. He began to spread amongst us the customs of the Franks. Upon his death the king of Portugal bribed the king (raja) of Cochin with plenty of gold and had him afflict severe persecution on the archdeacon and the congregation. In 1598, we deserted our own customs and adopted the customs of the Franks. It was then that the priests were forced to become celibate. In 1653, our prominent fathers Mar Ignatius the Patriarch came to Mylapore where St. Thomas was buried. Two deacons went to Mylapore to receive him. When they met with him, Mar Ignatius became depressed and wept bitterly. The deacons joined him in weeping. When the Franks saw what happened, they stationed guards lest the deacons see Mar Ignatius or converse with him. They knew that we had no bishop and that they were in control of the Indian dioceses. Mar Ignatius called unto him the two deacons secretly and handed them a *systaticon* (letter of commendation) to ordain Tuma. When the priests, deacons and the faithful learned about the mission of the two deacons, and that Mar Ignatius was brought to the citadel of Cochin, they rushed immediately to Cochin and pleaded with the pagan king (raja) of Cochin to rescue him from the hands of the Franks and deliver him to us. He promised to do so on the next day. Momentarily, the Franks offered the king plenty of silver and he permitted them to do whatever they wished. At that night, they tied Mar Ignatius by the neck and cast him into the sea. He died instantly. Afterwards, the Syrian clergy met at the church of Mattancheri and swore an oath to have nothing to do with the Franks. They installed archdeacon Tuma a bishop according to the order of our father Mar Ignatius.

In 1660, a metropolitan came to India by order of the pope but we did not accept him. He summoned a priest from the family of Mar Tuma, and after lavishing on him plenty of silver, ordained him a bishop. This split the congregation into two groups. And when this bishops passed away his supporters joined the Franks. They did so for two reasons: first to secure livelihood, and second to escape the persecution of kings (rajas). Following this time, when Mar Gregorius 'Abd al-Jalil came to Malabar, our priests were using unleavened bread in the Eucharist. In 1685, came Maphryono Basilus



(Yalda) and Metropolitan Iyawannis and made us relinquish Frankish customs and restore the traditions of our forefathers. Since then, and until this day, we never subtracted or added anything to them.

In 1708, came to this country a metropolitan named Gabriel by order of the Catholicos Iliyya. He proclaimed the doctrine of Two Natures and Two Persons in Christ. For this reason, conflict intensified between him and my uncle (Tuma IV). Some Syrians and Franks joined him. In celebrating the Holy Eucharist, Gabriel used both leavened and unleavened bread. But he observed fasting according to the Syrians' custom and the administering of the communion, according to the Franks' custom. Because there were no bishops to succeed him after his death, his followers returned to their old customs. The chain of bishops from my own family has not been interrupted until now. And when our Father Mar Ignatius came to this country, no bishop or patriarch, who came unto us by the order of Mar Ignatius, introduced a church rite without the consent of the bishop of this diocese. At present, there are forty-two churches following the Syrians and one hundred fifty following the Franks. The Commodore who rules over India has the power to restore to us the churches which joined the Franks. (lacunae)... the priests violate this matter and have intimate relations with women out of wedlock. They sleep in people's houses and celebrate the Mass in the churches. They are addicted to liquor and do not recite the morning and evening prayers. When I interrogated them about these matters they, encouraged by the (rajas), caused trouble in the church and threatened to join the Franks. For this reason, I have abstained from discussing these issues. I am ready to act according to the customs of the Syrian orthodox. Since the time of our Father Mar Ignatius and up to this day, the chain of bishops from my own family has not been cut off. In fact, no bishop or archdeacon was ordained for this diocese except from these two families. Furthermore, the patriarch and the bishop who came to this country by your order have been of one mind and soul with our fathers. At present, however, the bishop who came (lacuna)... rebelled against me and arbitrarily ordained priests and deacons. His behavior caused many to leave the church. If you do not send us a maphryono, many will join the Franks. Father! Remember these matters and the predicaments my fathers have suffered. I am still suffering the same molestations by the Franks."

The most significant points in this letter are:

- 1) St. Thomas appointed administrators for the churches he had established. They were from two ancient families. Likewise, the Syrian immigrants who came to Malabar in 345 set up archdeacons from these families for the Indian dioceses. Furthermore, from the time of Tuma I, and until

the time of Tuma V, the bishops belonged to these families. In fact, no bishop or archdeacon was ordained unless he belonged to one of them.

2) The church of India was Syrian Orthodox until the arrival of Bishop Abraham by order of the Nestorian Catholicos Iliyya. Gabriel altered its customs into Nestorian customs. The Syrian church of India accepted him perforce because there was no bishop other than him. There is no doubt that the book he brought along with him replaced the Orthodox Church rituals. Since then, the Nestorian rituals entered the church of Malabar like the *fanqitho* (*Service Book for the Whole Year*), called the Scrap Book, according to the tradition of the Monastery of Mar Gabriel and Abraham near Mosul known as the High Monastery. Therefore, there is no truth to the claim that from the beginning the rituals of the church of India were Eastern that is Nestorian.

3) Before the Portuguese controlled the Syrian church, the Syrian priests were lawfully married.

4) The cleric whom the Portuguese drowned in Cochin was Mar Ignatius, the Patriarch.

5) Only few people followed Gabriel, but returned to the Syrian fold after his death. This proves that the Syrian church had not been influenced by the Nestorian heresy.

6) At the writing of this letter, there were forty-two churches following the Syrian community and one hundred fifty churches following the Franks.

7) The Jerusalemite metropolitans and bishops who came to Malabar did not act without the counsel of the native bishop of the diocese.

8) Because of the strict disciplinarian and arbitrary actions of Bishop Iyawannis Yuhanna 'Araqchinchí who did not seek Tuma's advice, the author of the letter beseeches the Patriarch (of Antioch) to send them a maphryono.

9) The author points to the misfortunes he and his fathers suffered from the Latins.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: THE ORDINATION OF MONK SHUKR ALLAH OF ALEPPO A MAPHRYONO

At this time, there lived in Aleppo a venerable monk-priest named Shukr Allah Qasabchi. He was born in Aleppo in the first decade of the eighteenth century. His father was the deacon Musa son of Sham'una of Aleppo who by trade was a weaver of silk cloth decorated with gold or silver threads.<sup>264</sup> Being inclined toward monastic life, Shukr Allah entered the Monastery of Mar Musa the Abyssinian. When Mar Dionysius Jirjis, metropolitan of Aleppo (later Patriarch Jirjis III) observed his spiritual talents, he invited him to join his Patriarchal Office. He ordained him a priest in 1740. Several deacons studied under him.<sup>265</sup>

When Tuma V ( of Malabar) learned from the deacon Anton about the aptitude and good character of Shukr Allah, he convinced Iyawannis Yuhanna 'Araqchinchy to write two letters, at the church of the Virgin at Pallikara, addressed to Patriarch Jirjis III to ordain him, and no one else, a maphryono and dispatch him to Malabar. He guaranteed the expenses of his journey. Following is a summary of Tuma's letter to the patriarch:

"Basilius Yalda and Iyawannis (Hidayat) came to Malabar. The first shortly died and the latter proclaimed to us five doctrines, namely, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, fasting, the Eucharist, the church and the (One) Nature of Christ. He also allowed us to observe the rest of customs. Therefore, I beseech you to send us a patriarch, a metropolitan or a bishop ordained by Mar Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch. We hope that upon their arrival will succeed in restoring the Syrians who have joined the Franks to the Syrian fold. We have already addressed in this context a lengthy letter to the Patriarch of Antioch. However, when Metropolitan (Yuhanna 'Araqchinchy) arrived at Cochin, immediately I went and brought him unto me. But he began to ordain priests without consulting with me. Therefore, I beg you to ordain Father Shukr Allah a maphryono and dispatch him to us because we learned about him from Deacon Anton. My uncle (Tuma IV) was ordained a metropolitan by the laying on of hands

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<sup>264</sup> Shukr Allah was mentioned as a deacon among the Syrian clergy of Aleppo in 1739 according to an MS at the Patriarchal Library.

<sup>265</sup> See Shukr Allah's biography by His Holiness Patriarch Mar Ignatius Aphram I, Barsoum of Antioch in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 27–28.

of Metropolitan Iyawannis (Hidayat), and I myself was ordained by my uncle at the church of the Virgin at Pallikara.<sup>266</sup>

The letters were delivered by Deacon Anton. Meantime, Metropolitan Iyawannis borrowed a thousand rupees from the Dutch Company and gave them to Anton in order to deliver them to the patriarch. But being greedy,<sup>267</sup> Deacon Anton spent the money on himself.<sup>268</sup> In the middle of March, 1748, Anton arrived in Aleppo carrying the letters of Metropolitan Iyawannis and Tuma V to Patriarch Jirjis III and the monk Shukr Allah. He handed them to Shukr Allah who was then sick. After reading them, Shukr Allah sent the letter addressed to the patriarch who was residing in Amid. He also wrote the patriarch that he was ill for two months.<sup>269</sup> Meantime, Deacon Anton went to see the patriarch and related to him the condition of the church of Malabar and its need for an able maphryono.

The patriarch seriously considered the request of the Malabarians. Learning that they had unanimously chosen the monk Shukr Allah of Aleppo, he called him in order to ordain him a maphryono. He also addressed a letter to Tuma V informing him that his letters were received and that Shukr Allah was ill. He promised to delegate Shukr Allah to Malabar.<sup>270</sup> When Shukr Allah recovered, he journeyed to Amid on August 1, 1748. The patriarch ordained him a maphryono assisted by Cyril Gurgis San'a, metropolitan of Amid, and handed him a *systaticon*.<sup>271</sup>

In order to have the mission to India complete, the patriarch thought of sending to Malabar, along with the maphryono, some bishops, priests and deacons. As an act of honor, he named Iyawannis Yuhanna (of Qaraqosh), metropolitan of the Monastery of Mar Behnam, as Metropolitan of Jerusalem and changed his name to Gregorius. He also appointed him a delegate to Malabar around March, 1748.<sup>272</sup> Gregorius journeyed to Baghdad accompanied by the monk Yuhanna of Mosul, who came from the Za'faran Monastery, and the deacon Zakariyya. He also ordained in this year

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<sup>266</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

<sup>267</sup> A tract by the Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 96.

<sup>268</sup> See the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah in Syriac written by him. A copy is in my possession as well as *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 90 and 96.

<sup>269</sup> See the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah in Syriac written by him. A copy is in my possession and *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 90 and 96.

<sup>270</sup> See his letter below.

<sup>271</sup> Letter of commendation

<sup>272</sup> See *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 30.

(1748) Yuhanna of Gargar a metropolitan for Malabar and called him Severus at his ordination.<sup>273</sup> He sent him with the Chorepiscopus ‘Abd al-Nur Aslan of Amid to Baghdad during the sickness of Maphryono Shukr Allah awaiting the latter’s arrival in that city.

On August 15, 1749, Patriarch Jirjis III addressed a letter to Tuma V whose summary is as follows:

“We remember you day and night in our prayers along with the oblations we offer to the saints. We have already informed you about the sickness of our blessed son Maphryono Shukr Allah promising to send him unto you when he recovers. Thank God, he is now recovered and came unto us from Aleppo. We ordained him a maphryono and dispatched him to you to tend the flock of Christ in the fear of God. He will head all the faithful, the priests, the deacons, the archpriests and the congregation of Malabar. You should obey him and do nothing without his order. He will control the collection of the patriarchal tithe and the tithe of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. He is given authority over all matters. He will deliver all things to us with the knowledge of our sons Iyawannis (Yuhanna ‘Araq-chinchi), Gregorius, you yourself and Severus (of Gargar). He will set right your ordination. You yourself should rightly guide your priests and deacons and do nothing without his command. He has absolute authority over Malabar and India. By his order, all the priests and deacons shall be ordained. By his counsel all chief priests and bishops should abide. You should offer him due honor.”<sup>274</sup>

However, Metropolitan Severus of Gargar and the Chorepiscopus ‘Abd al-Nur of Amid returned to Baghdad because of sickness. When the diocese of Gargar became vacant in 1758, the patriarch entrusted it to Severus. Severus resided in Gargar until his death in the middle of 1758.<sup>275</sup> Gregorius and his companions remained in Baghdad eleven months awaiting the arrival of Maphryono Shukr Allah. They endured a great deal of adversities but never turned backward.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE JOURNEY OF MAPHRYONO SHUKR ALLAH TO MALABAR

On August 25, Maphryono Shukr Allah left Amid for Aleppo to prepare for the journey to Malabar. He bought what was necessary for him and for the

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<sup>273</sup> *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya* 7: 135

<sup>274</sup> A copy of the same is in my possession

<sup>275</sup> *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7:135.

church including church articles and manuscripts of church rites for three thousand rupees.<sup>276</sup> The number of these books was eighteen minus one. They included three significant manuscripts written on vellum in the Estrangelo script and two ancient manuscripts. The most significant of these manuscripts were the *Book of Canons*, the *Book of Pseudo-Areopagite*, a *Commentary on the Gospels* by Bar Salibi and the *Cause of all Causes*.<sup>277</sup> The patriarch sent forty-six religious manuscripts, commentaries and jurisprudence as a gift to the church of Malabar. They included three ancient copies of the Old Testament in Syriac,<sup>278</sup> a *Commentary on the Gospels* by Bar Salibi and the *Book of Hodojo (Nomocanon)* by Bar Hebraeus,<sup>279</sup> priest only in name, from the blessed town of Nabk. He acquired it when he was at the Jazira serving the holy church in the name of Mar Behnam, chief of the martyrs.” It is also followed by “In the name of He who is the Cause of every Good. I, the wretched Ignatius, according to the ineffable precepts of our worshiped God, have acquired this *Book of Nomocanon*. Patriarch Dawud (David) and his brother Bishop Tuma added it to their library in 1887 of the Greeks/1576. They were sons of the Maqdisi Yuhanna of the family of Nur al-Din, brother of Patriarch Yuhanna who had joined the saints (passed away). May God be praised”] In addition, the patriarch supplied the Indian mission with a chalice and paten, two crosses, three staffs, two collection

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<sup>276</sup> See the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah. This journey, published in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, is translated into English by Matti Moosa. See Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*, under publication by Gorgias Press. TRANS.

<sup>277</sup> See the biography of Maphryono Shukr Allah by Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum in, *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya* 7: 97.

<sup>278</sup> They also included *The Book of the Prophets* in three columns, transcribed in the Estrangelo and the western scripts by the lesser monk Basil, son of Shaykh Sa'id known as the Maqdisi at the Monastery of St. Barbara in the Mountain of Edessa in 1485 of the Greeks/1174 A. D., on January 4 in the time of the Patriarch of Antioch Mar Mikha'il (Michael Rabo) and the Metropolitan Mar Athanasius of Edessa. It was presented as a gift by Tuma VI (Mar Dionysius I) of Malabar to the English Dr. Claudius Buchanan in 1806. It is now preserved at Cambridge MS L 204. It shall be discussed later.

<sup>279</sup> This manuscript is deposited at the library of Malphono Matta Konat in Pampakoda. It is the oldest known copy of its kind. Its copying was completed on Wednesday, January 25, 1601 of the Greeks/1290 A. D. The postscript reads thus, “This Book of the canons of the Apostles belongs to Yusuf (Joseph).

plates, two bells, a censer, a pair of fans,<sup>280</sup> three copper candle sticks, three pairs of cymbals, a jar of Holy Chrism, three Jerusalemite crosses and relics of saints.<sup>281</sup> The patriarch authorized the maphryono to ordain Tuma V as a lawful bishop with the name of Dionysius. He supplied him with a quantity of Holy Chrism, a staff with two heads, a cross and a *systaticon*<sup>282</sup> upon his ordination of Tuma.

Maphryono Shukr Allah remained in Aleppo four months waiting for a caravan. Finally, he found one and left Aleppo on Sunday January 7, 1750 after midday. He was accompanied by the Chorepiscopus Jirjis, son of the Chorepiscopus Ni'mat Allah Tunburchi, the Deacon Anton, previously mentioned, the Deacon Musa, nephew of Gregorius Tuma, bishop of Damascus (1730–1751), the Deacon Hidayat, nephew of Maqdisi Elias Azraq, the Deacon Shukr Allah, son of Tuma of Amid,<sup>283</sup> the attendant 'Abd Allah, and Shamaya, the Indian merchant who had accompanied Deacon Anton from India. The company was seen off by a huge crowd of parishioners, clergy and deacons of whom were the Deacons Ni'mat Allah Shiqyaq, his cousin Anton, Ni'mat Allah Jarwa and Anton al-Wakil.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN: THE ARRIVAL OF MAPHRYONO SHUKR ALLAH IN MALABAR AND THE RETURN OF IYAWANNIS YUHANNA 'ARAQCHINCHI HOME

Maphryono Shukr Allah and his companions traversed desolate land and were exposed to perils and to fear of the Dulaym Arab tribe. A chief highway robber captured their belongings and books. He did not give them back until he was paid one thousand and five hundred rupees.

On Friday April 6 of Lent, they reached the town of Hilla and stayed in the house of 'Ata Allah, brother of the Chorepiscopus 'Abd al-'Azim of Amid. Metropolitan Yuhanna of Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh) had already dis-

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<sup>280</sup> The fans are long staves with a round plate at the top encircled with bells. They are hanged on the two sides of the altar and used during some parts of the celebration of the Eucharist. TRANS. They represent the two Cherubim who engulfed the Ark of the Covenant.

<sup>281</sup> See the biography of Maphryono Shukr Allah by His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 97.

<sup>282</sup> Letter of commendation. TRANS.

<sup>283</sup> See a historical tract written in Syriac at Malabar around 1770 now in my possession. Another tract dated 1841 is at the Patriarchal Library in Homs. Also, see the letter of Patriarch Jirjis III to Tuma V dated August 15, 1749 a copy of which is in my possession. It is reproduced in Chapter Seven of this book.

patched his Deacon Zakariyya to Hilla to accompany the maphryono and his companions to Baghdad because the land and the river routes to Basra were cut off. On Palm Sunday, the maphryono celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the house of Deacon 'Ata Allah. It was attended by Chaldeans, Armenians and a few Syrians who were at Hilla to whom he administered the Holy Communion.

On Monday of Passion Week, the group left Hilla for Baghdad reaching it on Wednesday. They were received by the monk Yuhanna, the two Deacons, Shukr Allah and Jacob of Edessa the attendant of Sulayman Pasha of Tiflis, Wali of Baghdad (1749–1761). Also was waiting for them at the entrance of the bridge the metropolitan Yuhanna. On Maundy Thursday, the Chorepiscopus Jirjis celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the house of Yusuf (Joseph) Tarzi Pasha Rumi. On Saturday of Light,<sup>284</sup> Metropolitan Yuhanna celebrated the Holy Eucharist. On Sunday of Resurrection, the maphryono celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the Armenian Church which was a solemn occasion. On this day, they were visited by Syrians and other members from different Christian denominations including the Carmelite Latin Bishop Immanuel. Deacon Jacob of Edessa extended to them great service and took care of their needs.

The company departed reaching Basra on Tuesday May 8. The amount they spent since they left Aleppo until they reached Basra, totaled five thousand rupees not to mention the troubles they faced. They met with Manhar Kenifus, consul of the Dutch Company, who was other than the official to whom Deacon Anton delivered the letter of the Dutch Commadore from Malabar, to meet the needs of the patriarchal delegates. When they asked the consul to offer them money he refused to pay them from the Company's funds. They were then forced to borrow from him six thousands and six hundred sixty rupees for twenty per cent interest to settle their debt. Also, they rented a house in Basra and hired an English ship for seven hundred rupees.<sup>285</sup> They addressed a letter to the patriarch informing him of what they did. In turn, the patriarch addressed a letter to Tuma V on August 29, 1750, urging him to take care of the maphryono, the Metropolitan Yuhanna and the rest of the company. He informed Tuma that they suf-

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<sup>284</sup> This is the Saturday preceding the Sunday of Resurrection. TRANS.

<sup>285</sup> This information is derived from the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah to Malabar and from the journey written by the Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi of Aleppo in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 232–241.



ferred great expenses for the journey to Basra, and had to borrow money from the Consul Kenifus.<sup>286</sup>

On June 24, they sailed from Basra and reached the port of Bandar 'Abbas where they remained seven months because of fear of pirates and the warfare which was going on then between the Persian princes. At this port they spent a thousand rupees not to mention the difficulties, fear and sickness they endured. The Chorepiscopus remained ill until he reached Malabar.

On April 23, the company arrived at the port of Cochin being afflicted with perils, fear of pirates, sea gales and sickness. Their expenses from Aleppo to Cochin totaled nine thousand and five hundred rupees which they borrowed from the Dutch Company in addition to the amount of two thousand rupees deacon Anton had already spent, as said earlier.

At the port of Cochin, they were received by the governor of the Dutch Company and its chaplain. Two files of soldiers in arms offered them salute. The Commadore welcomed them at his mansion and guns were fired in their honor. After receiving lunch at the table of the governor, they were led by the Company's officials to the beautiful house prepared for their staying.<sup>287</sup> They were visited by some native Syrian priests who received their blessing. Among them was the priest Abraham Kattomangat, already mentioned, who became attached to the maphryono until the latter's death.<sup>288</sup>

On April 24, the maphryono addressed a letter to Metropolitan Yuhanna 'Araqchinchin informing him of the arrival of the group safely at Cochin. He urged him to proceed to the city immediately. Metropolitan Yuhanna arrived in Cochin on May 14, accompanied by priests, the Deacon Jacob and laymen. He quarreled with the maphryono and the clergymen in his company for their good treatment of the natives who came to see them. He also quarreled daily with anyone who came to see the maphryono insulting some and beating others. His behavior was rough and shabby. The maphryono asked the Dutch Company to keep him in its custody until the time was opportune to ship him back to the patriarch. The patriarch has

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<sup>286</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

<sup>287</sup> See the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah written by him.

<sup>288</sup> See the letter of Abraham to the Patriarch of Antioch dated January 21, 1769, a copy of which is in my possession.

already written to the maphryono that, “If he (Yuhanna) proved to be of good conduct keep him, otherwise, send him back to us.”<sup>289</sup>

At the beginning of October, Metropolitan Yuhanna was sent back on board of the Company’s ship. At the end of 1752, the patriarch entrusted to him the diocese of Bedlis where he died in September, 1755, the same year in which his brother, Metropolitan Athanasius ‘Abd al-Karim, passed away.<sup>290</sup>

After the departure of Metropolitan Yuhanna ‘Araqchinchī, Maphryono Shukr Allah computed the debt he and the group incurred for the journey. It totaled two thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven rupees owed the Company and some Jewish merchants. Whatever Yuhanna left of belongings like seats, staffs and a vestment were recorded by the Company and delivered to the maphryono together with three hundred rupees.<sup>291</sup>

## CHAPTER TWENTY: TUMA V REFUSES TO MEET WITH MAPHRYONO SHUKR ALLAH

On the next day, April 24 of arriving at the citadel of Cochin, Maphryono Shukr Allah addressed a letter to Tuma V beginning thus, “Basilus Shukr Allah, maphryono of India,” informing him of his safe arrival and urging him to come and see him soon. The letter was delivered by the priest Yusuf. When Tuma failed to respond, the maphryono addressed to him a second letter asking him to come and reconcile with him and with Metropolitan Yuhanna ‘Araqchinchī in the presence of the (Dutch) governor. On May 2, Tuma V sent the maphryono a delegation of two priests, a deacon and few church notables to welcome him in his name. He promised to pay him a visit as soon as he found an opportunity. He also addressed a letter to the maphryono, carried by the delegation, informing him of the bad behavior of Metropolitan Yuhanna. He asked the maphryono to send him the monk Yuhanna and the deacon Anton together with the letters of the patriarch. He also asked the maphryono to send the books of church canons and rituals and the *systatikon* of his reordination. The maphryono responded by sending delegates to Pallikara with the requested books but not the *systatikon*.

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<sup>289</sup> See the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah to Malabar.

<sup>290</sup> For the biographies of these two dignitaries, see His Holiness Patriarch Aphram Barsoum in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 6: 267 and 7: 137–138. These biographies are translated into English by Matti Moosa. See Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Diocese* under publication by Gorgias Press. TRANS.

<sup>291</sup> See the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah to Malabar.

In his letter addressed to Tuma, he said, "We received your letter requesting us to send you the monk Yuhanna and the deacon Anton together with our *ystaticon* and the letters of Mar Ignatius addressed to you. It would be more appropriate if you would personally come to meet with us. If you did so, you will find that we have everything you have requested. Still, we do not blame you or want you to harbor an ill thought. We were motivated to come to this land only by the love of Christ and by sincere love for you. According to your request, we have sent the monk Yuhanna and the deacon Anton together with *The Commentary on the Gospels* by Bar Salibi in three volumes which contain what you need. We have also sent with them the *Orders of Ordinations*, *Order of the Candle*, *Order of Consecrating the Holy Chrism*, and the *Order of Confession* according to our rite. It contains diverse canons. We have also sent two letters addressed to you by the Patriarch Mar Ignatius."<sup>292</sup>

When Tuma's delegates to the maphryono reached the citadel of Cochinchina, they learned that the Dutch Company had intended to arrest Tuma if he came to Cochinchina to pay off the debts required of him. The delegates returned to Tuma informing him of the situation. On May 6, the two delegates of the maphryono returned and told him that Tuma was planning to summon the congregation within ten days, and then proceed to visit the maphryono. Meantime, the Commodore informed the maphryono that he had received a letter from Tuma saying that he would come to see the maphryono within eight days. He also said that he was afraid that the Commodore would detain him until he has paid the debt which he thought was enormous. Thus, while Tuma V was preparing to receive the maphryono and his companions with great pomp at Kandand, the Dutch Company was demanding the settlement of its debts, and would not allow them to leave the citadel unless they are settled.

On May 16, the maphryono addressed a fourth letter to Tuma delivered by the deacon Anton and the deacon Jacob. In this letter beginning thus, "Basilus Shukr Allah, maphryono of India," the maphryono went on to say, "Our two sons, the monk Yuhanna and the deacon Anton came back to inform us that you are intending to assemble the congregation in ten days and then proceed to see us. The venerable Commodore also wrote to us that you were intending to see us after eight days. We are still waiting to see each other at the Citadel in order to discuss issues according to the instructions of our Father Mar Ignatius. Because of my great love for you, I have so far addressed to you four letters and delegated to you our sons the

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<sup>292</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.

deacon Anton and the deacon Yaqub (Jacob). Please come along with them and meet with us. The brethren, Mar Gregorius, Mar Iyawannis (Yuhanna ‘Araqchinch) the Chorepiscopus Jirjis and the monk Yuhanna, send their greetings.”<sup>293</sup> Tuma excused himself saying that he was busy assembling the congregation. But he wanted the maphryono to send him the Chorepiscopus Jirjis. Maphryono Shukr Allah addressed a letter to the patriarch explaining the situation since he arrived in Malabar. He also addressed letters to some friends of whom was Gregorius Tuma, bishop of Damascus.

### **CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: THE LETTER OF SEVERUS ‘ABD AL-AHAD, METROPOLITAN OF EDESSA TO MAPHRYONO SHUKR ALLAH**

On October 19, 2062 of the Greeks/1751 A. D., ‘Abd al-Ahad, metropolitan of Edessa addressed a letter to Maphryono Shukr Allah prefaced thus, “To our father Basilius Shukr Allah, maphryono of India.” We deem it necessary to produce a summary of it for its historical importance and for unraveling some significant issues. After the usual preamble the metropolitan said, “Earlier, a pack of letters arrived in Aleppo addressed by you to Bishop Tuma (of Damascus). We replied informing you that the said bishop has passed away.”<sup>294</sup> We also informed you of our coming to Aleppo and mentioned many other events.<sup>295</sup> We especially mentioned Deacon Ni‘mat Allah Shidyaq, who loves you, that he has already informed you about these matters in detail. Now, a bunch of letters has arrived from our Lord the Patriarch in your name in answer to your letters addressed to him.<sup>296</sup> We have delivered them to you with our brother the deacon N’imat Allah.”

Metropolitan Severus ‘Abd al-Ahad goes on to inform the maphryono of the distress in Aleppo caused by the exorbitant prices which caused two-thirds of the Christians to beg. He said, “We borrow money to spend on the church and the bishopric. The high cost in Edessa, Diyarbakir and Mar-

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<sup>293</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

<sup>294</sup> Bishop Tuma of Damascus was ordained by Patriarch Shukr Allah at the end of 1730 and called him Iyawannis at his ordination. The patriarch entrusted him with the diocese of Damascus under the name Gregorius. See *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 6: 196–197.

<sup>295</sup> This is the third visit to Aleppo of Severus ‘Abd al-Ahad, metropolitan of Edessa. He remained for a while ministering to the diocese of that city.

<sup>296</sup> From this information we learn that the maphryono had in this year written to the patriarch from Malabar and received a reply from him.

din is much worse. But we treat the congregation with love which also reciprocates our love, especially the deacons N'imat Allah Shidyaq and N'imat Allah Jarwa." He further informs the maphryono of the conflict between Sophronius, metropolitan of the Rum Orthodox and his congregation in Aleppo. He points to the lawsuits lodged by both sides to the judge. He also tells the maphryono that the metropolitan of the Maronites was cast into prison for one night only. He further says that, "The deacons Anton al-Wakil and N'imat Allah of Homs are still in Tripoli. The Pasha (governor) has so far given them none of their rights. We extend our condolences for the death of the Chorepiscopus Gabriel, brother of the Chorepiscopus Elias of Aleppo the priest of Tripoli in the middle of August. His position is still vacant. A week from now, Jirjis, metropolitan of Jerusalem, shall come to Aleppo from the outskirts of Damascus.<sup>297</sup> We have ordained the novice monk Hanna of Sadad a priest-monk and sent him to Damascus to take charge of the church of Mar Behnam and teach the children.<sup>298</sup> Greetings to the Fathers: Metropolitan Yuhanna (of Bakhudayda) Metropolitan Yuhanna ('Araqchinchî), Bishop Tuma of Malabar, the Chorepiscopus Jirjis, the deacons and the congregation. The uncle of deacon Ni'mat Allah and his entire household send their greetings to Deacon Anton.<sup>299</sup> Those who kiss your hand and ask for your supplication, are the Chorepiscopuses Jacob and Ni'ma ad Elias, and your brother the priest Faraj Allah,<sup>300</sup> the teacher of the school the priest Hanna, the deacons Shukr Allah Shidyaq, Ni'mat Allah Shidyaq, Ni'mat Allah Jarwa, Ibrahim al-Wakil and the notables the Shidiyaqs (Archdeacons) Ni'mat Allah, Musa and Hanna Qirmiz.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> See his biography in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 6: 200–207. It seems from this letter that in 1751, Metropolitan Jirjis went through the Syrian countries collecting the tithes due his See. He reached Damascus and then Aleppo.

<sup>298</sup> This Hanna is Yuhanna Shuqayr who was assigned to the church of Aleppo, and studied under Maphryono Shukr Allah. In 1754, he was ordained a bishop by Patriarch Jirjis III for Damascus with the name of Gregorius. See *Patriarchal Magazine*, 7: 186–189. From this letter it also appears that Metropolitan 'Abd al-Ahad ordained him a monk-priest and sent him to Damascus. He became a patriarchal deputy in 1751.

<sup>299</sup> At the beginning of October, 1752, Deacon Anton paid five hundred rupees the shipment of merchandise. He collected an amount of money and sailed to Basra intending to take his household to India.

<sup>300</sup> He was brother of Maphryono Shukr Allah.

<sup>301</sup> A copy of this letter is with the family of Edavazhikal and another one in my possession.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: THE DUTCH COMPANY FILES A LAWSUIT AGAINST BISHOP TUMA V

Tuma V failed to pay off the debts required of him. The Dutch Company filed a law suit against him in the Civil Courts of Travancore. The court issued a warrant for his arrest but he fled from Pallikara to the church of Rakat in disguise. When the soldiers, accompanied by deacon Anton, came to arrest him they learned that he has already fled. They smashed the doors of the church and pillaged its belongings. They did the same at Pallikara and other neighboring villages.

Meantime, the Company permitted the maphryono and his retinue to leave the Citadel of Cochin and visit the churches in order to collect funds to settle Tuma's debt. On July 3, they left the citadel taking leave of the governor who ordered nine guns salute in their honor. The group visited the king (raja) of Cochin accompanied by the Company's official and soldiers. On the next day they left Cochin for Kandanad. At Kandanad they were received by the congregation and entered the city with great pomp. The parishioners requested the maphryono to provide them with a letter addressed to Tuma in order to bring him unto the maphryono. The maphryono agreed to their request. On July 18, the parishioners returned with Tuma's response saying that he could not accompany them to meet with the maphryono because of the soldiers' ill treatment of the people of the village of Pallikara and its neighborhood. Following is a summary of Tuma's response,

"To the Catholicos Mar Basilius Shukr Allah, the spiritual Father and shepherd of the true Christians, from the weak Tuma, bishop of India. I received your first letter with great joy, but your second letter grieved me greatly. I desired to come to you, and for this reason sent you priests and faithful laymen. But when they reached the Citadel of Cochin and heard from the respected Commissioner and from you that an order was issued for my arrest, they returned to me. I left for the church of Rakat. Others came and pillaged the church and villages. It was in this same manner that former church fathers fled when the Portuguese captured the Citadel of Cochin. Indeed, before you arrived at the citadel no such hatred was harbored by the Commissioner toward me or my fathers. In fact, the fathers delegated by my Mar Ignatius, and the delegates of the Franks, never committed such acts or proclaimed any law in the kingdom. I cannot come to you now for fear of the Commissioner. Moreover, when Metropolitan Iyawannis ('Araqchinch) came unto us we abstained from fasting and prayer.

The acts which they (the soldiers) committed secretly, are now being committed openly. Moreover, there are many who like to stir trouble.”<sup>302</sup>

This letter shows that Tuma V was prevaricating, and still worse, lying. Obviously, when he invited the maphryono (Shukr Allah) to ordain him a bishop, he haughtily claimed on the one hand that he was actually ordained by Tuma IV. On the other hand, he claimed that he was ordained by the patriarch himself who called him Dionysius, and thus he needed no confirmation of his ordination.<sup>303</sup>

Meantime, the maphryono addressed a letter to the congregation of Parur which shows his meekness and good intentions. He said, “Since I arrived in India, I labored to reconcile the two sides enduring distress and ordeals. I have even condescended to many people (in order to make peace). I ask you to see how much the Syrians are despised and rejected. They have been humiliated by the pagans and the Franks. Now is the appropriate time to gather our children unto us. If we fail to do so under this Commodore, we will never be able to do it afterwards.”<sup>304</sup>

### **CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: MAPHRYONO SHUKR ALLAH ATTEMPTS TO MEET WITH TUMA V**

At the beginning of September of this year (1751), Metropolitan Iyawannis ‘Araqchinchī sailed back to the Za’faran Monastery, the residence of the patriarch of Antioch. On September 15, the maphryono left Kandanad for Kothamangalam hoping to meet with Tuma V and reach an agreement with him. He delegated ten men to ask Tuma to proceed to Kothamangalam. Tuma excused himself for fear of the governors. The maphryono once more asked him to come and meet with him under guarantee of safety. Tuma said he would come after eight days. The maphryono asked him for the third time to proceed to Kothamangalam; Tuma promised to be there on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. On this day, he arrived in this town and was received with great honor. The maphryono ordered the church bell to ring thinking that Tuma would come to meet with him at the great church of the Virgin. But Tuma went to stay in the church of St. Thomas where Maphryono Yalda was buried. Shortly afterwards, the maphryono dispatched the monk Yuhanna and the deacons to welcome him and ask him to meet with the

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<sup>302</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.

<sup>303</sup> See the Letter of Patriarch Jirjis III to Tuma V dated August 21, 1753 a copy of which is in my possession.

<sup>304</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

maphryono. Tuma said that he was tired from the trip and could not go. Three days later, he sent his priests and others to the maphryono. They asked him to show them the *yystaicon* (letter of commendation) issued on behalf of Tuma. They inquired whether the maphryono and his clerics were truly Syrian fathers. Addressing one of Tuma's delegates, priest Yusuf blamed Tuma for hesitating to meet with the maphryono. He said that the maphryono had sent Tuma many invitations let alone the patriarch's letters addressed to him regarding his prevarication. Tuma's delegate said that Metropolitan Iyawannis 'Araqchinchí left them no grounds to trust the patriarch's delegates. To assure them of his good will, Maphryono Shukr Allah accompanied Tuma's delegates to the church and had the *yystaicon* read in the presence of a huge crowd. It was instantly translated into the Malayalam language. The maphryono delivered a pleasant speech which the assembled heard with great joy and then departed. They informed Tuma of their contact with the maphryono. On the next day, Tuma entered the church and delivered a speech accusing the maphryono of lying. For the second time, he sent a delegation to the maphryono questioning five church customs the maphryono had brought to Malabar not mentioned by the fathers who preceded him. They were:

- 1) Why do the maphryono and other high ranking Syrian clerics place a piece of metal at the end of their pastoral staff?
- 2) Why when do they solemnize weddings, have the bride stand on the right side of the groom?
- 3) Why do they hand the Godfather a sword?
- 4) Why do they draw a curtain at the altar?
- 5) Why do they say in the Creed "as he willed" and not "according to the Scriptures"?

The maphryono commented on these issues and asserted them. He said, "It is time now that you, our spiritual son Tuma, should proceed to meet with us and endorse these customs." Tuma was still not convinced of the maphryono's comments which were related to him by his delegates. Momentarily, the delegates began to quarrel with Tuma over these matters. In response, Tuma appealed to the maphryono, through the mediation of Syrians of goodwill, to write to him that these customs were observed by the Syrians. The maphryono responded.

On December 16, the maphryono and Metropolitan Gregorius addressed a letter to the patriarch informing him that they had already delivered a parcel of letters to Tuma, and that they thought of sending the



Chroespiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi back to Aleppo because of illness.<sup>305</sup> The maphryono waited hopefully for Tuma to meet with him but to no avail. Finally, he informed the congregation of his intention to visit the churches which supported him to instruct them in religious matters. Meantime, the congregation urged Tuma to meet with the maphryono. He promised to do so on February 15, 1752 but reneged on his promise. On the evening of February 16, he asked the maphryono to proceed to the church of St. Thomas to meet with him. The maphryono said he would be at the church in the morning if Tuma provided him in writing with his consent to reach an agreement with him. Tuma refused to write anything down. In the morning, however, the maphryono went to the church of St. Thomas and recited the Morning Prayer. When Tuma did not show up, he returned to the church of the Virgin.

Before leaving Kothamangalam, Maphryono Shukr Allah addressed a letter to the king (raja) and the Commodore about what happened between him and Tuma. The raja and the Commodore addressed a letter to the maphryono and also to Tuma asking them to reconcile with each other. The maphryono sent their letter to Tuma, but received no response. The maphryono sent elders to Tuma urging him to come into agreement with him as recommended by the rulers. Tuma replied that he had already written to the raja and was waiting for a reply. Three days later, the maphryono sent priests to Tuma but received no response. Once more, he addressed letters to the raja and the commodore who became angry at Tuma. But Tuma was quick in gaining their consent on the ground that there was no conflict between him and the maphryono. He also assured the two rulers that he would journey to Cochin and reach a rapprochement with the maphryono. The raja and the Commodore asked the maphryono to proceed to Kandanad since they would try to have Tuma meet with him in that city.

On Friday, the maphryono traveled to Kandanad. On Palm Sunday Tuma entered the cathedral at Kothamangalam where the maphryono was staying. He ripped off the step of the altar and tore down its curtain. He rebuked the priests who obeyed the maphryono to wear the Syrian vestment which the Metropolitan 'Abd al-Jalil and Maphryono Yalda had brought with them to Malabar. The congregation became outraged and no one followed Tuma in prayer. When he left the church, the congregation

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<sup>305</sup> See the letter of Patriarch Jirjis III to Maphryono Shukr Allah and the Metropolitan Yuhanna dated August 27, 2063 of the Greeks/1752 A. D., a copy of which is at the Patriarchal Library.

put everything back in its place and informed the maphryono accordingly. The maphryono addressed a letter to them asking them to maintain peace.

On May 3, 1752, the maphryono went to Cochin and met with the new Commodore. After explaining the reasons of the conflict between him and Tuma V, the Commodore said, "Our records show that men of this house (Tuma's house) always quarrel with Fathers delegated by Antioch." He promised to help. The maphryono went to meet with the raja and was honored by him. Then, he returned to Kandanad.

The maphryono began visiting the churches hoping to collect funds to settle the debt. Meanwhile, Tuma wrote to the churches visited by the maphryono instigating the priests not to observe the rites of the Syrian Church. He even had the audacity to ordain, in this month, his sister's grandson a deacon in order to succeed him later. He also ordained two more deacons simultaneously. But the majority of the congregation was not pleased with his action. On July 1, the raja addressed a letter to him asking that he stop making trouble and meet with the maphryono. He promised to do so on July 25, but reneged as usual.

On August 27, the patriarch addressed a letter to Maphryono Shukr Allah and the Metropolitan Gregorius commending their struggle and praising their patience. He expressed grief over Tuma's arrogance and insubordination. He said that he did not receive the pack of letters although he waited for it for a long time. But, he said, that he received a letter from the deacon Ni'mat Allah Shidyahq informing him that he had received a letter from the Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi saying that he had recovered at Basra<sup>306</sup> and that he wanted to journey to Abyssinia. In conclusion, he beseeched the patriarch to extend his blessings to the monk Yuhanna and to the deacons Anton, Shukr Allah, and Hidayat Musa.<sup>307</sup>

At the end of October of this year (1752), the maphryono addressed a letter to some parishioners in Syria containing a short account of his affairs from October, 1751 to October, 1752. From this letter we derived our information above.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> This letter shows that the Chorepiscopus Jirjis did not accompany Metropolitan Iyawannis 'Araqhinchy on his return to Syria at the beginning of October, 1751, but remained in Malabar until the spring of 1752. From Malabar he sailed to Jeddah (now in Saudi Arabia) bound for Abyssinia. Also, Jirjis composed an ode in the Sarugite meter, praising Maphryono Shukr Allah.

<sup>307</sup> This letter is at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>308</sup> It was published by His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 241–253.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: THE PATRIARCH CENSURES TUMA V FOR HIS INTRANSIGENCE

When Tuma V refused to change his attitude, Patriarch Jirjis III addressed to him a letter on August 21, 2064 of the Greeks/1753 A. D., censuring him for his intransigence and rebellion against Maphryono Shukr Allah and Metropolitan Gregorius. He also rebuked him for reviling religion and church offices. He advised him either to desist from error or he would be excommunicated. The Patriarch said,

“You personally addressed a letter to us through the deacon Anton asking us to delegate to you this Maphryono (Shukr Allah). We summoned him from Aleppo and ordained him a Catholicos based on your request. We have the letters you have addressed to us concerning this matter. However, not only did you not submit to these two dignitaries, but you went on instigating your people to dishonor them. If, Metropolitan (Iyawannis ‘Araqchinch) who was with you is the cause of this acrimony, he has been uprooted a long time ago like a tare from your field. You should know that we do not exchange a single hair of these two Syrian Fathers with the whole world. Alas! ‘The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.’”<sup>309</sup> We have sent these dignitaries to eradicate the tares from your customs which were planted by the Nestorians and others. Still you kept observing these reprehensible customs which contradict the teaching of our ancient Syrian church fathers. Now, we command you to submit to the authority of the Apostolic See of Antioch, obey its rules and eradicate your strange customs. There is no need to explain the customs of the Syrians for fear of repetition. You have with you our venerable brethren Mar Basilius and Mar Gregorius. Listen to them and follow their orders and teachings because we have entrusted them with the word<sup>310</sup> handed to us. We have previously written to you that these two dignitaries will confirm you as a bishop by the laying on of their hands. However, you insist on being intransigent claiming that you need no confirmation. When was it that any one ordained a deacon, a priest or a bishop without the laying on of hands?”

The patriarch went on to cite the example of King Saul and David. He also supported his words from the New Testament saying to Tuma, “You and those whom you made clergymen are unlawful because the empty vessel cannot be filled by another empty one. If, you think that in a former

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<sup>309</sup> John 1: 5. TRANS.

<sup>310</sup> Teaching of the Gospel. TRANS.

letter we called you Dionysius, it does not mean that I have confirmed you a bishop. I did this only with the hope that these venerable dignitaries<sup>311</sup> will in the future be ordained by the laying on of their hands. Again, if you say that your uncle Tuma IV ordained you a bishop, you should know better that your uncle was not a bishop but only a Chorepiscopus. In this capacity he has no authority of the laying on of hands. He cannot ordain a deacon, a priest much more a bishop. In fact, while your uncle was dying, a priest removed the miter from his head and placed it on yours, which is uncanonical. Furthermore, if you claim that the Nestorian Gabriel wrote a piece of paper to confer upon you the dignity of a bishop, and that one of the priests handed it over to you, he has deceived you by this paper because it was not written by Gabriel but by the priest who handed it over to you. He did this in order to please you. It has become evident to us that you are leaning on a broken reed and that your whole house is built on sand.”<sup>312</sup>

It seems that the patriarch derived his information from the account of Maphryono Shukr Allah which contained his affairs in Malabar from October, 1751 to October 1752, forwarded to you by the maphryono.

The patriarch wrote to Curien Stionis, governor of the Citadel of Cochin asking him to look after the maphryono and Metropolitan Yuhanna. He also requested him to convince Tuma V to come into agreement with the two dignitaries in order to have them confirm him a canonical bishop.<sup>313</sup>

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: TUMA V RECONCILES WITH MAPHRYONO SHUKR ALLAH

Tuma never desisted from his recalcitrance. Nor he resorted to the maphryono to ordain him a lawful bishop. On the contrary, he wandered throughout the churches to escape the officers of the Dutch Company. His condition urged the notables of the congregation to reconcile him with the maphryono. They succeeded in their effort at the end of 1754. At long last, the maphryono and Tuma met at Fotico<sup>314</sup> and discussed the debt due the Company. Those present pledged to convene another meeting in the nearest future to be attended by the delegates of the entire churches in order to

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<sup>311</sup> Maphryono Shukr Allah and Metropolitan Gregorius. TRANS.

<sup>312</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.

<sup>313</sup> See the biography of Maphryono Shukr Allah by His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 98.

<sup>314</sup> According to a source they met at Mavelikara. See Curien corepiscopa, *The Syrian Orthodox Church in India and Its Apostolic Faith* (1989), 109. TRANS.

discuss the question of the debt. Although after the meeting, the maphryono and Tuma V went their own ways, they kept corresponding with each other. On January 2, 1755, the maphryono addressed a letter to Tuma through a priest named Jacob pardoning him and conciliating with him. He instructed Jacob to tell Tuma that he had discussed his case at Fotico, but now he was sending the priest Jacob to convey to him his favor.<sup>315</sup>

A few days later, the Dutch Company tried to arrest Tuma V and bring him to Cochin. Tuma became sorely grieved and addressed a letter to the maphryono containing some harsh words. The maphryono addressed an amicable reply bemoaning his condition and promising to extend necessary help for his safety. The maphryono said, "Since we met at Fotico, the fire of love kindled in our hearts and we began thinking of you and asking God that no harm would befall you on our account. Now, you have written us about the attempt to have you arrested and brought to Cochin because of the Company's debt. Indeed, we have become immensely saddened over your condition. Please address letters to the churches in your name and in our name to meet, as they promised, in order to discuss the question of the debt. You will then overcome this predicament. I do not want you to suffer distress on our behalf. Furthermore, I did not personally take the money we borrowed from the Company's as a debt; deacon Anton whom you have assigned to guide us to Malabar, took it. We have spent the borrowed money for our passage by the full knowledge of the Company itself. Of course, you know all this. Why did you then address to me harsh words? I will be satisfied with whatever the notables decide when they meet to settle this question."<sup>316</sup>

When the churches' delegations met to discuss the question of the debt, they resolved that both the maphryono and Tuma should visit the churches to collect donations. So, both the maphryono and Tuma went on separately on a fund raising campaign facing many hardships. Such hardships are evident from the letter Maphryono Shukr Allah addressed to Tuma on September 25, 1755 of the Greeks/1755 A. D. The maphryono said, "We have received your letter. Four days ago, we sent you a letter with Mappanchery informing you that we arrived at Cochin. We paid off the amount of 1700 rupees and received a receipt from the Commodore accordingly. Then we went to Mulanthuruthi, Kollanchery, Joncordy and Kothamnamalam. We traversed this distance on foot because we had no boat to

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<sup>315</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

<sup>316</sup> A copy is in my possession.

sail. Also, it was difficult to travel in a litter because of the jungle especially that it was the planting season. There were also hedges stretching along the highways. Our children of ten churches addressed a letter to us about their financial difficulties. God be their help. As you said, we shall also try to obtain a receipt from the Commodore for the amount of 6000 rupees. However, we learned that the Commodore is coming to Mavelikara. You should probably inquire about the receipt and inform us accordingly. If we ourselves asked him for a receipt, we must have first a letter from the deputy stating that the said amount has been received by him. Only in this case will we be able to obtain a receipt from the Commodore.”

Thus, the maphryono and Tuma cooperated in settling the debts. Philip, the Syrian writer of Malabar, said that in addition, Tuma settled a portion of the debt by the sale of properties belonging to the church at Niranam.<sup>317</sup>

Nevertheless, the reconciliation (between Maphryono Shukr Allah and Tuma V) was temporary. Indeed, the noble efforts of the maphryono and the great forbearance he showed toward Tuma yielded no fruits. Tuma insisted on his intransigence. He performed church services based on his alleged ecclesiastical authority. He did not even accept the canonical ordination by the maphryono until he died in 1765, as shall be seen later.

P. Cheriyan says that the maphryono and his retinue insisted on reordaining Tuma V, but he refused until the end, and succeeded. The reason is that as the maphryono and his men reconciled with Tuma, they wrote down a document containing the proviso that Tuma should subject himself to the Patriarch of Antioch, while they pledged not to ordain priests without his permission. The copy of the document is attached to the Seminary Case, Exhibition 27.<sup>318</sup>

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX: THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MAPHRYONO SHUKR ALLAH

Maphryono Shukr Allah endured hardships and perils of traveling on both sea and land. In those days traveling was not that easy. As soon as he set foot in Malabar, he was faced with many complex problems. They were caused by Tuma, the self appointed bishop, his supporters and his Latin adversaries. He welcomed these adversities with a cheerful attitude treating them with Christian meekness. Realizing that Tuma's arrogance had no

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<sup>317</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 156.

<sup>318</sup> P. Cheriyan, *The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society*, (1935), 53.

cure, he began to administer the church with an apostolic zeal. He persevered in spreading the word of God, instructing the believers and teaching the clergy Biblical sciences and church rituals. Together with Mar Gregorius Yuhanna, he issued church rules and canons.

On the second Day of Resurrection, April 15, 1752, Maphryono Shukr Allah ordained the monk Yuhanna (Christophorus) of Mosul, a bishop at the church of Kandanad and called him Iyawannis at his ordination. He transferred Mar Gregorius from Cochin to Kandanad after he recovered from a sickness which lasted fifteen days. He began to visit the churches. In some of them he faced vehement opposition, especially the church of Mallikulam which was controlled by the Franks. The parishioners of this church with their tyrannical priest withstood him. When he was at Mammalserry, the king (raja) addressed a letter to him to proceed to Pallikara to administer the congregation, or dispatch a bishop to take charge of it. He dispatched Bishop Yuhanna for this purpose. But since the congregation of Pallikara lacked faith, Tuma V kept instigating them against Bishop Yuhanna. They caused him so much trouble almost forcing him to leave. But the maphryono encouraged him to stay and treat the congregation with fatherly love. He also instructed him to abide by the raja's order. When Bishop Yuhanna fell ill, the maphryono sent him to Cochin for treatment.<sup>319</sup>

Maphryono Shukr Allah bought a piece of land in Mattanchery-Cochin for four hundred and fifty-seven rupees plus other expenses for the building of a bishopric and a church in the name of the Apostolic See. He addressed a letter to Bishop Yuhanna at Kandanad informing him of this transaction and asking him to partake with his friend in the expenses of its construction.<sup>320</sup> He completed this project with indefatigable zeal. Later, he resided at this church with his deacons and Metropolitan Gregorius.

On August 3, 1752, the day of the commemoration of Bishop Iyawannis Hidayat, Maphryono Shukr Allah was at Mulanthuruthi. He was joined by Metropolitan Yuhanna and Bishop Yuhanna. The maphryono invested the priest Gurgis of Mulanthuruthi with the monastic habit. After staying in the northern region until October 15, 1752, he traveled to visit the fourteen Syrian churches in southern Travancore, leaving Metropolitan Gregorius in Kothamangalam and Bishop Yuhanna in Kandanad. He traveled to Kottayam reaching it on October 16 and was received with alacrity by its people.

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<sup>319</sup> See the tract of Maphryono Shukr Allah in *Al-Majalla al-Patrtiarchiyya*, 7: no. 5.

<sup>320</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

But, he described its priests as extremely cunning foxes. At Kottayam, he was visited by parishioners from the southern churches. He has this to say about them, "They are uncouth and have excelled in stinginess."<sup>321</sup> At the beginning of 1753, he returned to the north.

We have already seen that Maphryono Shukr Allah had cooperated with Tuma to collect funds to help the churches pay off the Company's debts. He also met with the raja of Cochin and the Company's Commodore many times and received their favor. He consecrated the Holy Chrism and ordained priests, monks and deacons. He reordained the priests and deacons who have been ordained by the unlawful Bishop Tuma. Furthermore, he followed in the footsteps of his predecessors in combating the celibacy of the priests which was introduced by the Latins into Malabar.<sup>322</sup>

Having ministered to the church of Malabar for thirteen years and a few months, this combatant hero, answered the call home of his Lord at the church of Mattancheri on October 9, 1764 and was buried in the church of Kandanad. His commemoration is celebrated annually with great honor on January 21, 2080 of the Greeks/1769 A. D. The monk Abraham of the Kattumangat family wrote to the Patriarch of Antioch the following about him, "The events which took place concerning us in India are known to your Holiness through our late father Maphryono Shukr Allah. In the time of this saint, the condemned Tuma caused us great distress while that saint (Shukr Allah) endured adversity with patience. He visited the parishes teaching, preaching and explaining (the faith) and restored about twenty churches. But that rebellious (Tuma) passed away only one year after the death of our father (Maphryono Shukr Allah). In fact, since that angel-like man entered Cochin and until his death, your servant (the author of the letter) was in his company. The maphryono had not even the opportunity to perform an ordination because of the opposition of that impudent (Tuma). He did not even give a *systatikon* (letter of commendation) to Bishop Yuhanna. Be that as it may, the maphryono labored in the vineyard of the Lord properly and has now joined the saints."<sup>323</sup>

Maphryono Shukr Allah was prudent and of immense aspiration. He was a distinguished teacher well versed in the Syriac language and religious sciences.<sup>324</sup> He wrote down in Syriac his journey to Malabar in addition to

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<sup>321</sup> See his tract in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7, no. 5.

<sup>322</sup> See his tract in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7; no 5.

<sup>323</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

<sup>324</sup> See the tract on the church of Malabar written around 1841.



many letters whose summaries were given in the previous chapters. He also wrote in Arabic a catechism entitled *Tafhim al-Tadabir al-Muhyiyya li Atfal al-Masibiyya* (Explaining the Life-Giving Dispensations to Christian Children) in twenty- four chapters and an Introduction. He also wrote a treatise about his affairs from October, 1751 to October 1752. While a deacon, he translated from the Syriac into Arabic an order of *Husoyos* (supplicatory prayers) for Lent and Passion Week. Under him studied many clerics of Aleppo and Malabar including Gregorius Yuhanna Shuqayr (d. 1783), metropolitan of Damascus mentioned by the monk Abraham Kattumangat in his above letter, Dionysius ‘Abd Allah Shidyaq of Aleppo, metropolitan of Aleppo and them of Damascus (d.1801), and Dionysius Mikha’il Jarwa, metropolitan of Aleppo.

The mother of Maphryono Shukr Allah and his three brothers: Jirjis, Elias and Tuma were still living in 1785.<sup>325</sup> He had also a brother called Faraj Allah, who was a priest in Aleppo.<sup>326</sup>

When the Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi was in Kandanad, he composed in the Sarugite (twelve meter) a twelve-line ode in praise of the maphryono. In 1896, the priest ‘Abd al-Ahad of Ba’shiqa<sup>327</sup> also composed an ode in his praise. On December 15, 1937, when the church at Kandanad was renovated for the second time, the priest Abraham donated a tablet to be placed on the grave of Maphryono Shukr Allah. On it was inscribed in Syriac his title name of Basilus followed in Malayalam by “Maphryono Basilus Shukr Allah who was delegated by the Patriarch of Antioch Mar Jirjis III to the church of Malabar in 1749. He passed away at the church of Mattancheri on October 9, 1764 and was buried here.”

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: THE CONSTRUCTION OF MAR BEHNAM’S MONASTERY IN VATTIKAL

About the year 1769, a group of celibate priests including monk Abraham and his brother the priest Benjamin and the priest Jacob, founded a monastery on a spot in a mountain in the neighborhood of Mulanthuruthi called Vattikal. They were joined by the priests Gurgis and Joseph, as said in the letter which one of them, the monk Abraham addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch. The letter has been referred to in previous chapters. In this letter,

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<sup>325</sup> See his biography in the *A-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 27–28.

<sup>326</sup> See the letter of Severus ‘Abd al-Ahad addressed to Maphryono Shukr Allah dated October 19, 2062 of the Greeks/1751 A. D.

<sup>327</sup> Ba’shiqa is a village north of Mosul. TRANS.

Abraham asked the patriarch's blessing for the new monastery, its inhabitants and anyone who may join it. He also asked the patriarch's blessing of the rules to be set for the administration of the monastery and the designation of a superior for it. The monastery was to bear the name of Mar Behnam and his sister Sarah.

Monk Abraham was from the family of Kattumangat in Mulanthuruthi which descended from a brother of Andrew of Kharput previously mentioned. He was an intelligent and able teacher. He studied church rituals and the Syriac language under Metropolitan Iyawannis 'Araqchinch. For his intelligence and melodious voice, the metropolitan ordained him a deacon and then a priest for the church of Mulanthuruthi.<sup>328</sup> Abraham remained in the company of Maphryono Shukr Allah since he arrived in Cochin and until his death, as mentioned in his previous letter. He is the same priest Gurgis<sup>329</sup> who was clothed with the monastic habit by the maphryono on August 3, 1752. In his tract, Maphryono Shukr Allah said this about him, "This (Gurgis) is from Mulanthuruthi. He is of venerable origin and has learned our rituals and prayers. We found him eligible, and hope by the intercession of the Virgin (Mary) will lead a righteous life. May the Lord make him yield good fruit."<sup>330</sup>

For a time, Abraham instructed the deacons in the house of the maphryono at Mattancheri. After the maphryono passed away, he moved to his town and taught at its church.<sup>331</sup> He graduated efficient deacons and priests. In a copy of a Syriac Gospel completed by the deacon David, son of Matta Pinnakal of Mulanthuruthi on Wednesday of Palm Week on March 16, 1772, are mentioned the names of the teachers, deacons, students, priests and church fathers at Mulanthuruthi. This copy was in the possession of the priest Zechariah Chamkullal of Mulanthuruthi who was a scribe of the late Dionysius Joseph (d. 1909), metropolitan of Malabar. Shortly afterwards, the true intentions of this monk (Abraham), and the wickedness he concealed, were exposed as shall be seen later.

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<sup>328</sup> See the biographies of these dignitaries by P. M. Patross, 13–14.

<sup>329</sup> He is mentioned in the historical sources of Malabar as Gurgis, Abraham and also as Curien

<sup>330</sup> The *Al-Majalla a-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 252.

<sup>331</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written about 1841.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT: THE SUBMISSION OF TUMA VI AND HIS ORDINATION

Tuma V remained rebellious to the end. He ordained deacons and priests by simony.<sup>332</sup> In 1765, he had the audacity to ordain his sister's grandson a bishop in the name of Tuma VI to succeed him. In this year, he suffered a worst death for his rebellion and manipulation of God's sacraments. He was buried in the church of Niranam.

Ideas are conflicting about his death. Here is what Abraham Kattumangat wrote about him to the Patriarch of Antioch in his previously mentioned letter. He said, "Concerning the death of that condemned (Tuma V) some say he was killed by the people. Others say his bowels spilled out when he went to the rest room to relieve himself. Whatever that may be, he was found dead in the morning and his darkened body was oozing pus. Yusuf (Joseph) who succeeded him is no different from him. He relies on his wealth although he pretends to be of contrite heart. We have no idea whether he behaves this way because of piety or ambition or for obtaining a higher rank." Abraham's letter is dated January 21, 1796, four years after this event.

Although at the beginning, Tuma VI was like his uncle relying on his wealth, he became repentant at the end. He intended to reach an agreement with the Syrian fathers to gain their confirmation. He wanted to do so soon after his uncle's death, but was prevented by some ritualistic customs. The customs, however, were side tracked by the Syrian fathers for the sake of peace except for the celebrating of the Holy Eucharist according to Antioch's rite.

On September 11, 1768, Mar Iyawannis Yuhanna, bishop of India, addressed a letter to Tuma VI from a church in the southern region saying, "Since we left our homeland, we were only contemplating what is good for you and our believing congregation. There is no time to dwell on the past, but we may do so verbally when we meet each other by God's grace. When

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<sup>332</sup> Simony, is a term after Simon Magus who practiced sorcery in Samaria. When he saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles Peter and John, he offered them money in order that he would lay his hands on people and they would receive the Holy Spirit. Simon was condemned by Peter who told him "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money" Acts 8: 20. Thus, the church universally condemns any high ranking cleric who performs ordination for money. It was considered Simony. TRANS.

we were in the northern region, we were informed that you were desirous to make peace with us. For this, you called some believers unto you who entreated you to accept four Syrian usages. You replied that we should attend the assembly of the faithful and discuss with them these issues. Therefore, we hastened to Kayamkulam and met with the people from the north and the south whom you delegated to the assembly. They said that it was difficult to change these four customs. We said if these customs were difficult to change, let us overlook three of them and only adhere to the one concerning the celebration of the Eucharist. Son, we are strangers in this land. We have given up our brothers, relatives and friends. In fact, to us you have become like them.”<sup>333</sup>

Iyawannis continued this noble effort until Yusuf relented in mid-1770. On Sunday, as Metropolitan Gregorius was celebrating the Holy Eucharist at the church of Niranam, Tuma V entered the church suddenly and fell at his feet asking his forgiveness. The metropolitan extended to him his hand and welcomed him. On May 29, 1770, Gregorius together with Bishop Yuhanna ordained him a legitimate bishop and called him Dionysius at his ordination. They handed him the pastoral staff, the cross and the *gystaticon* which Patriarch Jirjis III had intended for Tuma V if he was re-ordained.<sup>334</sup> To the *gystaticon* of the patriarch they added the following, “Yusuf (known as Tuma), was ordained by Gregorius, metropolitan of Jerusalem and Iyawannis, bishop of India, a metropolitan for the Syrian nation in Malabar and was called Dionysius at his ordination by order of our Father Mar Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch.”<sup>335</sup>

After his ordination, Dionysius wrote down the following statement and handed it to the fathers. He said, “I, the poor and weak among the fathers of the church, Metropolitan Dionysius Yusuf, write at will this document for the venerable Fathers Mar Gregorius, metropolitan of Jerusalem and Bishop Iyawannis and others. I pledge to celebrate the Holy Eucharist as the Syrians do. I also pledge to offer Bishop Iyawannis and others gifts. I further pledge to allot each one of them a *panam* for their daily expenses.”<sup>336</sup> This statement is written at the church of Niranam in August, 1770.”<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.

<sup>334</sup> See Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 161 and the tract by the priest Philip Edavazhikal, 55.

<sup>335</sup> A copy is in my possession.

<sup>336</sup> Panam is a unit of Malabar’s currency. TRANS.

<sup>337</sup> A copy of this statement is in my possession.

Dionysius reordained the priests and deacons who were unlawfully ordained and had four priests marry.<sup>338</sup>

The Syrians of Malabar rejoiced and handed Dionysius the following statement, "We, the priests, deacons and lay people profess the faith of the three Ecumenical Councils.<sup>339</sup> To you our Metropolitan, we say in one voice, do whatever you will whether regarding ordination of deacons and priests or building a monastery or a church. We are Syrians. If you recruit a teacher or perform baptism, matrimony and funeral, we will be subject to your authority. Even if you found it necessary to contact the raja, we will be with you until death. If we contravene one word of this statement we shall be condemned and cursed by our Lord Jesus Christ, by our Lord Mar Ignatius (the Patriarch) and by our own metropolitan. We condemn what you condemn and accept what you accept. Bless the Lord for his forgiveness."<sup>340</sup>

According to the *Travancore State Manual*, the raja of Travancore personally mediated peace between Tuma VI and the Antiochian fathers with the proviso that Tuma should be reordained by them.<sup>341</sup>

Since then, Dionysius and Iyawannis acted as one in the administration of the church. In the meantime, Mar Gregorius lived in the church of Mattancheri built by Maphryono Shukr Allah. This is mentioned in a historical tract written shortly after the reconciliation between Tuma VI and the Antiochian fathers as follows,

"In 1751, arrived the Maphryono Shukr Allah from the renowned city of Aleppo with Mar Gregorius, metropolitan of Jerusalem and Bishop Mar Iyawannis from Athur, that is Mosul. They were also accompanied by chorespiscopuses, deacons and priests. A conflict then ensued between us and them which lasted twelve (more correctly nineteen) years. When reconciliation was achieved, these dignitaries ordained Bishop Tuma with the name of Dionysius as a Metropolitan of India. This was in conformity with the *systaticon* of the Chief Father, Patriarch Mar Ignatius they brought along with them. Accordingly, they handed Dionysius the pastoral staff, the crown, the cross and a jar of Holy Chrism sent by the patriarch along with other arti-

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<sup>338</sup> A tract by Philip Evadhazikal.

<sup>339</sup> They are the Councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431). TRANS.

<sup>340</sup> A copy of this statement is in my possession.

<sup>341</sup> See the *Travancore State Manual*, 2: 209 and Cheriyan, *The Syrians of Malabar and the Protestant Mission*, 54.

cles necessary for the use of the chief priest. Now, we are conducting everything with peace, amity and without conflict.”<sup>342</sup>

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE: THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF GREGORIUS YUHANNA OF BA KHUDAYDA (QARAQOSH)

Gregorius Yuhanna was son of the priest Ishaq of Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh) and his mother was Shamma. He belongs to the family of the previously mentioned Maphryono Yalda.<sup>343</sup> He was born about 1695. He and his brother Saliba chose a life of seclusion at the church of the Virgin and of Yuhanna Bosni in Qaraqosh where they read spiritual books. Then, they moved to the Monastery of Mar Behnam where Metropolitan Iyawannis Karas invested them with the monastic habit in 1723 and ordained them priests. In 1740, they visited the Holy Places in Jerusalem and went to stay at the Za’faran Monastery. In 1747, Patriarch Jirjis III ordained Yuhanna a metropolitan for the diocese of Mar Behnam’s Monastery to succeed Metropolitan Karas. A conflict, however, ensued between him and the congregation of Qaraqosh which forced the patriarch to dismiss him from his position.<sup>344</sup>

In 1749, the patriarch delegated Gregorius Yuhanna and Maphryono Shukr Allah to Malabar. Yuhanna was a great help for the maphryono in his endeavor to promote the affairs of the church of Malabar. Upon the death of the maphryono, he succeeded him and performed his duties effectively. On January 21, 2080 of the Greeks/1769 A. D., monk Abraham Kutamngat, already mentioned, addressed a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch concerning him saying, “If you inquire about our Fathers Metropolitan Yuhanna and Bishop Yuhanna, I would say that they have become old and bored. They want to return home. In this month Abraham, the bishop’s brother arrived to take the bishop back home. Likewise, the metropolitan wants someone to come and take him home.” This letter shows that both dignitaries had become old and tired of administering the church of Malabar. Reconciliation with (Tuma VI) has not yet been accomplished by them. Later, however, they celebrated the installation of Tuma as a legitimate

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<sup>342</sup> A copy of this statement is in my possession.

<sup>343</sup> See the tract by Maphryono Shukr Allah in the *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 252.

<sup>344</sup> See his biography by His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 29

bishop for Malabar. It was only then that the banners of peace fluttered and they relinquished the idea of returning to the homeland.

In 1772, Gregorius's sight became so dimmed that he almost lost his vision. One day, while residing at the church of Kayankulam, and Mar Iy-awannis residing at Fotico and Mar Dionysius residing at the church of Omalloor,<sup>345</sup> the monk Abraham went to see Gregorius with the intention of taking him to Mulanthuruthi for treatment. Mar Gregorius agreed and went first to Mattancheri to the house of Maphryono Shukr Allah. Abraham took care of him. He also took care of his treatment especially since he had some medical knowledge and had written some medical treatises. These treatises are still preserved by the Kattumangat family.<sup>346</sup>

At this time, the church of Malabar suffered schism by the monk Abraham. The schism was ascribed to Gregorius, as shall be seen in the following chapter. But Gregorius's health declined so much that Abraham took him to Mulanthuruthi for treatment. At this town he passed away on June 27, 1773 and was buried in the northern wing of the church next to the altar. The church of Mulanthuruthi still commemorates him annually with great honor.

Gregorius ordained a great number of priests, monks and deacons. He was efficient in the Syriac language. We have come upon a lengthy treatise written by him entitled *Revelation* in which he discussed religions and punishment and reward. It was translated and published in Malayalam.<sup>347</sup> He also composed in 1719, a five-line ode in the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter on Repentance.<sup>348</sup>

### CHAPTER THIRTY: THE ANJOORIAN SCHISM

The Anjoorians are a group of the Syrian Church of Malabar who seceded in the eighteenth century and established a separate diocese in the province of Calicut. They also founded an unlawful bishopric hierarchy which exists until this day. Following is some of this bishopric's history.

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<sup>345</sup> According to the tract by the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat still in manuscript form.

<sup>346</sup> See the alleged bishops from the Kattumangat family by P. M. Patros, 15–16 and 30.

<sup>347</sup> This treatise is at the Library of Mar Ignatius in Omalloor, Malabar.

<sup>348</sup> This ode is at St. Matthew's Monastery appended to *Kthobo d-Zalge* (*The Book of Rays*) by Bar Hebraeus.

We have already seen that the monk Abraham Kattumangat was invested by Maphryono Shukr Allah with the monastic habit. Following the death of the maphryono he addressed a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch. He also took care of the treatment of Mar Gregorius Yuhanna in Mattancheri and Mulanthuruthi. Historians, however, have different opinions about him. Some claim that Gregorius ordained him a bishop with the name Cyril as a reward for his treatment and also for apathy toward Dionysius I. Others maintain that Abraham assumed the dignity of a bishop claiming that Gregorius had conferred it upon him. The former historians, however, claim that Gregorius ordered the monk Paul Kattadi to celebrate the Eucharist on Friday October 17, 1772 in his presence. At the end of the service Gregorius ordained Abraham a bishop. Monk Paul was then residing in the bishop's house. It is believed that he was the same Korola mentioned among those who established the Monastery of Mar Behnam in Vattikal, and that Gregorius invested him with the monastic habit.<sup>349</sup>

It was also alleged that after his ordination, Abraham visited the raja of Cochin and obtained plenty of funds from the Dutch Company. He corresponded with the churches of the kingdom of Cochin visiting some of them and ministering to the others. He had many supporters in these churches, especially those of Mulanthuruthi, Kallikanchara and Kandanad. He went to see Mar Gregorius hoping he would bequeath to him his church vessels and money. He also wrote to Adrian Moyens, governor of the Citadel of Cochin, about his visit to Gregorius. Moyens sent his secretary Abraham Rudolph Schatts, to the church of Mattancheri where Gregorius was residing. Gregorius said to them in Arabic that he was sick and intended to write his last will. He decided to bequeath his possessions to Cyril (Abraham) and his successors. Paul, Schatts's interpreter and Shaykh Ahmad, a Muslim, informed Mar Gregorius of the matter. They wrote down a will signed by Mar Gregorius and two witnesses: Johannes Pose and Francis Ribert. They pasted it with a stamp worth *pathak*,<sup>350</sup> with Schatts's signature. They placed a facsimile of this will in the records of the Dutch Company's file 27. Twelve *pathaks* were assigned as expenses of the students who were studying at the metropolitan's house and twelve *pathaks* for the nearby hospital. The total amount Metropolitan Gregorius owned was estimated at two

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<sup>349</sup> See the biographies of those so-called bishops from the Kattumangat family.

<sup>350</sup> Pathak is a gold currency either singular or double. The singular *pathak* is worth 36 rupees and the double, 72 rupees.



thousand *pathaks*.<sup>351</sup> As the metropolitan's sickness worsened, Cyril (Abraham) took him to Mulanthuruthi for treatment. He passed away on June 27, 1773.<sup>352</sup>

Those who held the second opinion deny these matters based on the following evidence,

1) The deacon Hidayat was a member of the retinue of Maphryono Shukr Allah. He lived with his Malabarian wife in Mattancheri.<sup>353</sup> When he heard the news of Abraham's ordination, he asked Mar Gregorius whether it was true. Mar Gregorius told him that he never heard of such news.

2) If the judges of the Cochin Courts were convinced that Abraham was undecitful, they would have not issued a verdict that he was not a bishop. There was also no need for issuing a royal decree to have him arrested and handed over to Iyawannis and Dionysius who forced him to unfrock the habit of a bishop.

3) Abraham's deception was exposed by Metropolitan 'Abd al-Masih of Amid, the Patriarchal Deputy to Malabar in 1825. 'Abd al-Masih perused the letter presented by Abraham's fourth successor, Philoxenus Gurgis. It stated that Mar Gregorius had invested the monk Abraham and his successors with the episcopal dignity. This letter bore the name of Gregorius Yuhanna, metropolitan of Jerusalem on which were pasted two seals cut off from Gregorius's letters as shall be seen later.<sup>354</sup>

It is strange that, after admitting this fact<sup>355</sup> the learned Canaanite Philip Edazvihakal of Malabar who, jointly with the priest Abraham Konat, teacher of the church Of Mammalsery, composed an Ephramite (seven-syllabic) ode in 2137 of the Greeks/1826 A. D., while imprisoned in Hasur say, "It was then that everyone knew about the objects which fell into the hands of this ignoramus through the monk Gurgis<sup>356</sup> who stole the cross and the staff of the blind Gregorius Yuhanna, metropolitan of Jerusalem at his death." Later, however, Philip, ignoring what he had already said. In his

<sup>351</sup> That is either 72,000 or 144,000 rupees.

<sup>352</sup> See the biographies of the alleged bishops from the family of Kattumangat, pp. 17-19.

<sup>353</sup> Mar Gregorius lived first in Kandanad. When his Mulanthuruthian servant killed his first born son for sheer greed of his jewelry, Mar Gregorius became very sad and left for Mattancheri, Cochin until he passed away.

<sup>354</sup> See the tract written in 1841 on the church of Malabar.

<sup>355</sup> Meaning the deceptive story of priest Abraham's ordination as a bishop by Metropolitan Gregorius. TRANS.

<sup>356</sup> Abraham Kattumangat. TRANS.

Syriac tract written on May 28, 1854, he says, “Gregorius lost his sight. When he was staying in the house of the maphryono Shukr Allah in Cochin, he was deceived by the monk Gurgis, of the church of Mulanthuruthi, who had Gregorius ordain him a metropolitan with the name of Cyril.”<sup>357</sup>

The news of the ordination of Gurgis spread like lightening. Iyawannis and Dionysius, who were then in the southern part of Travancore, rushed to the church of Kandanad. At the church were also gathered crowds of people to discuss what should be done. At Kandanad they were told of the death of Mar Gregorius. Iyawannis, the clergy and lay people hastened to Mulanthuruthi to attend his funeral. Abraham, knowing that they were coming to Mulanthuruthi, shut the doors of the church and the bishop’s house before them. They remained outside the wall knocking but with no response. They returned to the church of Kandanad with deep sorrow.<sup>358</sup> They convened a meeting in which they resolved to take Abraham’s case to the raja of Travancore. Meantime, Abraham behaving as a legitimate bishop, invested a cleric from Kandanad with the monastic habit and ordained three deacons.<sup>359</sup>

### CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE: ABRAHAM TRIED AND FORCED TO SHED THE EPISCOPAL HABIT

Iyawannis and Dionysius dispatched a delegation to the raja of Travancore. When the raja met him at Trivandrum, he thought of sending an embassy to the raja of Cochin consulting him concerning this matter. Meantime, Iyawannis and Dionysius sent a delegation of a priest and seven laymen to the raja of Cochin about the same. The two rajas decided that the case should be referred to the Dutch Company which set up a court of twelve judges to try Abraham. Following are some of the questions addressed at the trial to Abraham and his answers.

Q. Why did the Patriarch of Antioch send four chief priests to Malabar?

A. In order that the people of Malabar would observe the Syrian rites and traditions.

Q. Why did the Patriarch send the chest cross, the staff and the *systatikon* (letter of commendation)?

A. In order to be given to Tuma, bishop of Malabar.

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<sup>357</sup> This tract is at the Edavazhikal family.

<sup>358</sup> See the tract on the Church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*

Q. How will these articles benefit Tuma?

A. To administer the churches of Malabar and ordain Mar Dionysius.

Q. How many chief priests are there in Malabar at present?

A. There is only one metropolitan and one bishop.

Q. Are they both of the same family?

A. No. One is from Malabar and the other from Antioch.

Q. Was there a need for other chief priests?

A. No.

Q. Where should a metropolitan be ordained: in the church or in the house?

A. In the church.

Q. Is the house of the Maphryono a church or a mere house?

A. It is called a house.

Q. How many Christians are there?

A. There are no Christians there.

Q. Can a blind metropolitan perform episcopal functions and celebrate the Eucharist?

A. No.

Q. In this case, then, is it lawful for a metropolitan to be ordained without the presence of priests and congregation?

A. No.

Q. Is it lawful for a metropolitan to overstep the authority of Mar Ignatius?

A. Never.

Q. Does Mar Gregorius have the authority to ordain you (a bishop)?

A. No.

Q. Can a blind metropolitan see whether you were wearing the robe of a metropolitan or a patriarch?

A. No.<sup>360</sup>

One and a half years later, the court issued an order for Abraham's arrest. It declared that he was not a bishop but a mere monk. It also decreed that he has no right to perform the rights of the churches in the kingdom of Cochin<sup>361</sup> because he was uncanonically ordained but appropriated the chest cross and the staff of Mar Gregorius.<sup>362</sup> When he learned that an or-

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<sup>360</sup> See the tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, and the tract of the priest Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>362</sup> See the tract of Philip Edavazhikal.

der was issued for his arrest, Abraham wrote to Varapoza, the Latin metropolitan, to offer him asylum. The metropolitan was delighted to help. But before the men of the Latin metropolitan reached him, Abraham was arrested in the village of Ponikara.<sup>363</sup> The court referred his case and its decision to the raja of Cochin. Also, it sent Abraham to the raja guarded by a soldier. The raja endorsed the court's decision and delivered Abraham to four soldiers to take him to the Diwan (Prime Minister.). The prime minister ordered that he should be delivered to the hands of Iyawannis and Dionysius at the church of Kandanad. The two dignitaries ordered Abraham to discard the bishop's robe in front of a huge congregation of clergy and lay people. On a Sunday, they thronged in the said church. A table was set before the altar placed on it the Holy Cross, the Gospel and lit candles. Iyawannis and Dionysius questioned Abraham about the repugnant actions he did against the Syrians traditions. He said, "I have sinned." They further asked him to take off the bishop's robe and place it before the cross, the staff and the Gospel. He did saying, "I have sinned against heaven and against you."

Abraham remained in the company of Iyawannis and Dionysius for three months. Then he pretended to be sick and asked their permission to let him go home. They did.<sup>364</sup> He departed for Kuniyamkulam to the house of the priest, Ittoop.<sup>365</sup> From there, he went to Thoziyur (or Anjoor) in the province of Calicut which was under the authority of the Dutch Company. He put on the episcopal vestment again and stayed at first in the house of a layman named Cherin for three years.<sup>366</sup> He bought a piece of land by permission of the raja of Ponattur on which he built a church and a resident. The foundation stone was laid on May 15, 1774. He addressed a letter in the name of Mar Gregorius Yuhanna claiming that this metropolitan has ordained him a bishop. He cut off Gregorius's seal from one of his letters and stitched it on Gregorius's alleged letter. He camouflaged it with flower images drawn around it in black and red.<sup>367</sup> Meantime, his disciple, the priest of Kandanad whom Abraham made a monk, fled to the Citadel of Cochin for an asylum. He learned from his master sorcery and adopted the doctrine

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<sup>363</sup> See the biographies of the alleged two bishops from the family of Kuttamangat, 21–22.

<sup>364</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>365</sup> See the biographies of the alleged two bishops from the Kuttamangat family, 33.

<sup>366</sup> See a tract of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat still in manuscript form.

<sup>367</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

of the Heldesians. He committed immoral acts and his behavior was publicly exposed. He was stricken with a contagious disease and died. His body was not buried but cast on the sea shore and was devoured by dogs.<sup>368</sup> The three deacons whom Abraham ordained unlawfully were summoned by Dionysius. He ripped off their deaconate habits and they became laymen the rest of their lives. One of them was Zakkai of the Mankendi family of Mulanthuruthi.<sup>369</sup> Mar Dionysius then departed Kandanad for Niranam.<sup>370</sup>

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO: THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MAR IYAWANNIS YUHANNA OF MOSUL

Iyawannis Yuhanna was born in Mosul at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He became a monk at the Za'faran Monastery and was ordained a priest by Patriarch Shukr Allah on December 5, 1724.<sup>371</sup> In 1749, he was dispatched by Patriarch Jirjis III to Malabar along with Maphryono Shukr Allah. On April 30, 1752, the maphryono ordained him a bishop at the church of Kandanad for the Indian diocese, but had no opportunity to provide him with a *systaticon*.<sup>372</sup> Shortly afterwards, he sent him a document authorizing him to perform episcopal services. The maphryono said, "We bless the priests whom you have ordained. As Mar Ignatius granted me authority, so do I grant you authority by the power of the Holy Spirit to consecrate churches, ordain priests and deacons and condemn and oust from the church those who do not accept the truth and serve the Holy Sacraments. We have learned that some people speak against you vain words. This is expected because words spring from the storehouse of the heart. The metropolitan, the Chorepiscopus Jirjis and deacon Hidayat extend their greetings."<sup>373</sup>

At first, the maphryono appointed Iyawannis Yuhanna to Pallikara the center of Tuma V. But the congregation, instigated by Tuma, caused him a lot of distress which he endured with great patience. He received encouragement from the maphryono but finally succumbed to illness and went to

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<sup>368</sup> Aee a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>369</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>370</sup> See a tract of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat still in manuscript form.

<sup>371</sup> See his biography by His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum in the *al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7: 102.

<sup>372</sup> See the letter of the monk Ibrahim to the Patriarch of Antioch dated January 21, 1769.

<sup>373</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.

Cochin for treatment. When he recovered the maphryono stationed him in Kandanad. Upon the maphryono's death, he, along with Metropolitan Gregorius, ministered to the Indian diocese. His name was changed into that of Christophorus but he still signed his letters with the name of "Iyawannis, bishop of India."

In 1769, Iyawannis' brother Ibrahim journeyed to India to bring him back to Mosul.<sup>374</sup> He dealt prudently in reconciling with Tuma VI in 1768, as shown previously, and until it was effected in 1770. He participated in the ordination of Tuma VI.

Iyawannis Yuhanna continued laboring to protect the interests of the Apostolic See until 1794. In this year he invested the two priests Philip of Kayankulam who lived with him, and Matten from the family of Dionysius I, with the monastic habit.<sup>375</sup> He wanted to ordain the second as an assistant bishop for Dionysius to succeed him in the future, but died on April 7, 1794 without fulfilling his desire. He was buried in the church of Chenganur where his commemoration is annually celebrated. In April, 1796 Dionysius ordained the monk Matten a bishop with the name of Dionysius VII to be his successor.<sup>376</sup> As to the monk Philip, he translated the four Gospels from Syriac into Malayalam, as shall be seen later. He passed away before 1714.<sup>377</sup>

Iyawannis Yuhanna was well versed in the Syriac language. We have come upon a letter he addressed to Tuma VI in 1768 whose summary we gave earlier. He also wrote a short commentary on the Lord's Prayer and a testimony he wrote down for a priest after his ordination.<sup>378</sup>

### **CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE: THE ALLIANCE OF THE CATHOLICS OF MALABAR AGAINST THE LATIN BISHOPS**

At this time flourished among the Catholics of Malabar a man called Mathu Tharakan. He was zealous for the faith of Rome despite his hatred of the Latin bishops and missionaries. He decided to establish an independent native Syrian episcope subjected to the pope of Rome.<sup>379</sup> He chose two

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<sup>374</sup> See the letter of the monk Ibrahim to the Patriarch of Antioch dated January 21, 1769.

<sup>375</sup> See the tract of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat still in manuscript form.

<sup>376</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 164–165.

<sup>377</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the priest Philip Edavzhikal.

<sup>378</sup> It is at the Library of Mar Ignatius in Omalloor.

<sup>379</sup> Philip, *Ibid*, 163.

priests of Malabar: Joseph Kariattil and Thomas Paremakel. He sent them to Portugal and to Rome carrying letters signed by the clerics of Malabar on April 27, 1778. After twenty-two months' journey, they reached Lisbon, capital of Portugal, and then proceeded to Rome. They explained to the pope and also to Queen Maria Francisca of Portugal that their purpose was to establish a native episcopate to bring under its banner all the Christians of St. Thomas. They defended with avid zeal the oppressed rights of the Malabarians. Upon returning to Lisbon, Joseph Kariattil was ordained a bishop for Cranganore on February 26, 1783, much to the rejoicing of the Syro-Catholics of Malabar. But the Carmelite monks wrote to Rome and Portugal against Joseph to block his return to Malabar. When Joseph and Thomas Paremakel were delayed, the Syro-Catholics of Malabar addressed a letter to the pope signed by seventy-eight priests. They explained their deplorable conditions, the antagonism of their foes and their adherence to the Roman faith. They also said that they were the ones who delegated the two priests to Lisbon and Rome and urged that they should be sent back to Malabar. Thus, the Portuguese queen sent them to Malabar unheeding the letter of the Carmelite monks. Arriving in Goa, the two priests were invited to dinner by the Carmelite monks who put poison in Joseph's food. He died on September 9, 1785. Grieving over his death, the Syro-Catholics of Malabar turned against the Carmelites. They met at Verapoza and decided to have no more a Latin bishop. They appointed Thomas Paremakel a *periodeutes* to manage their affairs until they would request a metropolitan from the Chaldean patriarch. In return, the Carmelites filed a suit to the native rajas and bribed the rulers. When they failed, they addressed letters to Rome and Portugal against the Syro-Catholics.<sup>380</sup>

In the course of the papists' rift, Mathu Tharakan suggested to Dionysius I that the Syro-Catholics and other Syrians should unite in doctrinal issues under him as a native leader. They should profess the primacy of the pope and embrace the doctrine instituted by Pope Urban VIII. Although Dionysius expressed joy for such a suggestion, and was willing to surrender some issues in order to win back the Syro-Catholic to his fold, he furiously rejected the terms of the union proposed by Tharakan. He asked the raja of Travancore's permission to convene a meeting to debate the faith of the Syrians and the Syro-Catholics. The raja, who tried his utmost to please

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<sup>380</sup> See the letter of the Syro-Catholics of Malabar addressed on March 13, 1796, to Yuhanna Hormizd in charge of the Patriarchate of Babylon (Chaldean Patriarchate) in the collection of the Chaldean priest Jirjis Khayyat.

Tharakan, agreed with hesitation. Dionysius also found himself forced to agree to the same. On September 20, 1791, the two groups met in Kayamkulam. When the meeting opened, Mathu Tharakan was told of the death of his mother. The meeting was postponed to November 22. On the appointed day the meeting convened at Niranam. The Syro-Catholic priests, expecting victory, brought vestments and what was necessary to celebrate the Eucharist. How wonderful! As the meeting opened Tharakan was told that his sick son was dead. The meeting was dispersed. After this, Tharakan never interfered in such matters for a time because of the adversities he had suffered.<sup>381</sup>

On March 13, 1796, the Syro-Catholics addressed a letter to Yuhanna Hormizd who was in charge of the Chaldean church signed by sixty-six priests. They criticized the Jesuit and Carmelite monks for their repugnant actions and for murdering Mathu Tharakan. They requested Hormizd to send an able metropolitan and priests to teach theology, church rites and chorals because of lack of learned men in these fields and that the Carmelites have distorted them. They further said that if Hormizd responded to their request, there was a possibility that the Nestorian of Malabar would join them. They added that the Carmelites had pirated the letters addressed to them by the Patriarch Yusuf III.

In 1780, the Syro-Catholics addressed a letter to Yusuf IV but received no reply. They addressed another one together with a letter from the raja of Travancore carried by a delegation headed by Paily, attendant of Mathu Tharakan.<sup>382</sup> Upon receiving the delegates, Yuhanna Hormizd ordained Paily a bishop for Malabar.<sup>383</sup> He sent him back in 1797 with the priests Yusuf of 'Ain Kawa and Hormizd Pekana Armouti to elicit the truth about the situation in Malabar.<sup>384</sup> Both Paily and the periodeutes Thomas Paremakel, previously mentioned, administered jointly the Syro-Catholic churches in Malabar. Shortly afterwards, the Latin bishop of Verapoly surreptitiously administered poison to Paily in a drink causing him to lose his speech. He died but his death was covered up.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 164–165.

<sup>382</sup> See the collection of materials by the Chaldean priest Jirjis Khayyat.

<sup>383</sup> See the tract on the Church of India by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>384</sup> See Butrus Nasri, *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, 2: 397.

<sup>385</sup> See the tract on the Church of India by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.



### CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR: THE FOURTH PERSECUTION

In 1790, Tippu Sultan of Mysore invaded Travancore and Cochin causing the Syrians great adversities. Tippu killed, looted and demolished their towns and some churches including the church of Arthat (Kunnamkulam), Parur and Angamali. He even forced some Christians to circumcise but no one of them embraced Islam. The Dutch Company, declared war on Mysore and fought back Tippu who withdrew.<sup>386</sup>

The Syrian suffered another distress from their native Syro-Catholics. The reason was that the raja of Travancore was of weak will. He favored Mathu Tharakan, whom we saw, was motivated by selfish interest. Despite the adversities which afflicted him, Mathu began intriguing once more in order to achieve his base goals. He decided to convene a meeting at Kayankulam to discuss the doctrines of the Syrians and the Papists (Catholics). The meeting convened and discussed the points of difference between the two groups for fifteen days but without a conclusion. Realizing that there was no prospect for a union, he resorted to the raja of Travancore. He accused Dionysius Tuma VII of looting the properties of a government minister who had been removed from office for misconduct. The raja fined Dionysius twenty-five thousand rupees.<sup>387</sup> Also, the properties of the churches of Chenganur and Niranam together with the chest cross and staff of Mar Dionysius were sold for five thousand rupees. In addition, Dionysius paid five thousand rupees from his private money. The rest of the amount was paid by church collections. Mathu Tharakan tried to coax Dionysius that his debt would be stricken off if he embraced the faith of Rome. But Dionysius preferred to live poor rather than sell his orthodox faith for perishing silver.<sup>388</sup>

When Tharakan's schemes failed, he resorted to the policy of Meneses.<sup>389</sup> Accompanied by armed soldiers, he arrested Dionysius and Syrian notables who were cast into prison at Alleppy. Deprived of food for several days, hunger forced Mar Dionysius to sign a document already written by Tharakan to the effect that he had accepted the profession of faith instituted by Pope Urban VIII for the Orientals. He also accepted the decisions of the Robber Council of Udayampur (Diamper). Accordingly, he celebrated the

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<sup>386</sup> Philip, *The Syrian Church of St. Thomas*, 162–163.

<sup>387</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 165 and the tract on the church of India written around 1841.

<sup>388</sup> Philip, *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>389</sup> See above Book One, Chapters Eight to Ten. TRANS.

Eucharist three times using unleavened bread.<sup>390</sup> The first celebration of the Eucharist was at the church of Tathanpalli in Alleppy on May 30, 1799; the second at the church of Alleppy and the third at the church of Kallorkad.<sup>391</sup> Two weeks later, the Indian poor people of southern Travancore, being heavily burdened by the exorbitant salt tax imposed by Tharakan who was granted a monopoly by the government to collect it, revolted against him. Proceeding to Trivandrum to put down the revolt, Tharakan was intercepted on the way by the rebels who cut off one of his ears, boiled it with herbs and had him eat it. The raja was grieved and recompensed Tharakan with a golden ear. Tharakan's calamities, however, constantly worsened. Meantime, Dionysius managed to flee Alleppy to Niranam where he openly confessed his weakness in the church. As an act of redemption, he asked the churches to celebrate the Mass in his behalf at his own expense.<sup>392</sup>

After all this, is it not strange that the Chaldean priest Butrus Nasri says, "The delegation sent by Yuhanna Hormizd in 1797 to Malabar returned five years later presenting to him the letters of the churches of Malabar. One of these letters was from Metropolitan Dionysius, the Jacobite (sic), promising to join with his flock the Babylonian (Chaldean) patriarchate if the patriarchate happened to send them a metropolitan to minister to the churches of Malabar? The whole purpose (Nasri claims) was that the entire churches should be one Roman Catholic body following the same rite."<sup>393</sup>

A question here is in order. Where is this letter? And why did the Chaldean priest Jirjis Khayyat not include it in his scrap book in 1858? Khayyat did his utmost to search for materials like this letter to be used as a sharp weapon by his Patriarch Yusuf Odo against Rome which had suppressed his rights? And why did not Jamil Shamu'il publish it in his scrap book which contained similar materials? I have personally searched for this letter at the end of 1946 at the Chaldean Library in Mosul assisted by the Chaldean Chorepiscopus Istephan Kacho (later a metropolitan) but found no trace of it.

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<sup>390</sup> Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 166.

<sup>391</sup> Philip, *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>392</sup> Philip, 166.

<sup>393</sup> Butrus Nasri, *Dakbirat al-Adhban*, 2: 397.



## **PART FOUR: THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH OF MALABAR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BRITISH RULE**

### **CHAPTER ONE: THE PROTESTANTS AND THE SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR**

In 1602, the Dutch government declared the establishment of the Dutch East India Company. The Company penetrated India extensively so that within a short time the Portuguese army gradually retreated. Finally, the Company defeated the Portuguese and expelled them from India. Shortly afterwards, the British Merchant Company began to establish foot in India. It captured Malabar from the Dutch but finally surrendered to the British government.

Both the Dutch and the British Companies encouraged the dissemination of the Protestant faith among the Syrians, as the Portuguese before them spread the Roman faith. They sighted the flourishing Syrian church with a hawk's eye as it sights a sparrow. We have seen in the previous chapters that the officers of the Dutch company and its chaplains tried to establish amicable relations with the church of Malabar in order to win its allegiance. One of these was Professor Carlos who presented Tuma IV with a gold gilded manuscript and asked to provide him with the formula of his faith. He also tried to reconcile him with Gabriel the Nestorian. Likewise, Professor Henricus Schaff addressed to him a letter containing the formula of his faith. He asked him to provide him with the formula of his faith too. He also sent him a copy of the New Testament to collate it with the copy in his hand. Indeed, the Company's chaplain in Cochin invited Tuma to join the Protestant church, claiming, untruthfully, that the Syrian church holds the doctrine of Eutyches.<sup>394</sup> Henricus addressed to Tuma four letters from

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<sup>394</sup> Eutyches is a fifth-century archimandrite of a monastery in Constantinople. He tried to defend the formula of faith of St. Cyril of Alexandria which maintained

Amsterdam asking in one of them to provide him with the story of St. Thomas and the Franks in Syriac. We have already seen this information in the previous pages.

The British began to entice the Syrians of Malabar to join the Church of England since the beginning of the nineteenth century. This harmed the Syrian church tremendously as shall be seen shortly.

Col. Macaulay was the first British Resident in Travancore. He thought of severing the relations between the church of Malabar and the Apostolic See of Antioch. Obviously, his intention was to pave the ground for his own church (the Church of England) to control the church of Malabar. And when Metropolitan Dioscorus Yuhanna of Mosul was delegated to Malabar by the Patriarch of Antioch Matta (1782–1817), Macaulay shipped him back to the patriarch.<sup>395</sup>

Macaulay played a big role in the rebellion of the monk Joseph Pullikottil against Tumas VIII. His intention was to create a schism within the church and allow him to fish in murky waters.

Col. John Munro who succeeded Macaulay created more problems than his predecessor. He allowed the Protestant (Anglican) missions to operate within the church and spread their virulent principles. This caused the Syrian church a multitude of woes as shall be seen later. His successor, Co. M' Douall, sent Metropolitan 'Abd al-Masih of Amid back to the Apostolic See in 1825. He cast into prison the priests who remained adhering to the orthodox faith and insisted in their obedience to the Apostle See as shall be seen shortly. However, we should not disregard the financial aid of 10, 500 rupees offered the church by Col. Macaulay. It was deposited in the government's bank in the church's name for 8% interest as was the custom in the country at that time.<sup>396</sup> Neither should we disregard the fact that under

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that after the Incarnation there was but One Nature of the Divine Logos. However, out of ignorance, Eutyches maintained that the divine nature of Christ absorbed his human nature with the result that Christ had only one Divine Nature. His formula of faith was condemned by the Syrian Church. TRANS.

<sup>395</sup> E. M. Philip says that Metropolitan Dioscorus was of hot temper and his behavior was not welcomed. This could have been only a lame pretext for Macaulay who, sending Dioscorus back to the patriarch, was determined to have the Syrians submit to the authority of his own church. TRANS.

<sup>396</sup> The question of this so-called gift by Macaulay is a subject of dispute. E. M. Philip, the native historian of the church of Malabar, maintains that Macaulay played no role in this reported gift. What he established is that, under certain circumstance, he borrowed the amount of 10,000 rupees from his friends the Syrians

Munro the Syrians enjoyed an eminent status. They occupied key positions in the government of Travancore and gained great influence vis-a-vis their pagan and Roman Catholic opponents. In 1814, however, the Indian Company appointed chaplains and a bishop for the British armies in Bengal to prepare for missionary activities in India. In the following chapters we shall treat the activities of the Protestant (Anglican) missionaries in the Syrian church of Malabar and their relation with its bishops.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE VISITS OF DRS. KERR AND BUCHANAN TO DIONYSIUS I

In 1806, the Englishman Dr. Kerr,<sup>397</sup> Senior Chaplain of Madras, paid a visit to Dionysius I (Tuma VI) delegated by the Lord William Bentinck, governor of Madras, to investigate the state of the church of Malabar. Shortly afterwards, Dionysius was visited by Dr. Claudius Buchanan, Vice-Provost of the College of Fort Williams in Calcutta. He was sent by the Government of Bengal to search for ancient Syriac manuscripts, to translate the Holy Bible into Malayalam and to gather necessary information about the Syrian church. Buchanan visited the Syrian churches of Mavelikara, Chenganor, Kallicheri, Puthencave, Maraman, Kozhencherry, Niranam, Rani, Kandanad, Angamali and Kunnampulam. He met with a host of Syrian priests and with Mar Dionysius more than once and wrote down his conversation with him. Following is an extract of this conversation.

Buchanan said that, "The metropolitan told me, 'You have come to visit a declining church. I am now an old man, but hoping to see better days cheers my old age, though I may not live to see them.' I submitted to the Bishop my wishes in regard to the translation and printing of the Holy Scriptures, 'I have already fully considered the subject' said he, 'and have determined to superintend the work myself, and to call the most learned of

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and the bishop of Verapoly. The money was invested for the maintenance of the Syrian seminary at Kottayam. See Philip, 169–170 and Curien Corepiscopa, *The Orthodox Syrian Church in India and its Apostolic Faith* (1989), 116–117. Another Syrian historian of Malabar makes it clear that the amount of 10, 500 rupees was entrusted by Mar Dionysius to Col. Macaulay to be invested by the British East India Company in perpetuity at eight percent interest annually. This is evident from the Cash Receipt dated December 1, 1808. See David Daniel, *The Orthodox Church of India* (New Delhi, 1972), 74–75 and Appendix II, 165. TRANS.

<sup>397</sup> Richard Hall Kerr. TRANS.

my clergy to my aid. It is a work which will illuminate these dark regions, and God will give it his blessing.”<sup>398</sup>

Concerning Dr. Buchanan’s proposal of a union between the Syrian Church and the Church of England, Metropolitan Dionysius inquired of him the advantage of such union. Buchanan said, “One advantage would be that English clergymen or rather missionaries ordained by the Church of England might be permitted hereafter to preach in the numerous churches of the Syrians in India and aid them in the promulgation of pure religion against the increasing influence of the Romish Church. Furthermore, those ordained by the Syrian Bishop (Dionysius) might qualify to preach in the English churches in India.” The Bishop said, “I would sacrifice much for such a union; only let me not be called to compromise anything of the dignity and purity of our Church.” I told him. “We did not wish to degrade; we would rather protect and defend it.” The Next day the Bishop returned an answer in the words, ‘that a union with the English Church, or at least, such a connection as should appear to both Churches practicable and expedient would be a happy event and favorable to the advancement of religion in India’.”<sup>399</sup>

Dionysius presented Dr. Buchanan with a significant Syriac manuscript of the Holy Scriptures which was preserved at the library of the church in Angamali saying, “I hope that London will protect it for a thousand years.”<sup>400</sup> In turn, Buchanan presented this copy to Cambridge University Library. Buchanan promised to translate the Holy Bible into Malayalam. When he visited Dionysius again in 1807, he took with him to Bombay a copy of the Gospels translated from Syriac into Malayalam by the Syrian Rabbān (monk) Philip of Kayukankulam and had it published in 1811 at the Courier Press. Heed also published in London the entire Holy Bible in Syriac for the benefit of the Syrians of Malabar. In this same year he published his book *Christian Researches in Asia*.

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<sup>398</sup> For this passage, I relied on E. M. Philip *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 167. TRANS.

<sup>399</sup> Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*, 130–131 and Philip, 167–168. TRANS.

<sup>400</sup> Buchanan, *Ibid.*, 137.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE COMING TO MALABAR OF DIOSCORUS YUHANNA OF MOSUL AND HIS DEPORTATION

Dioscorus Yuhanna is 'Abd al-Azim, son of Tamerkhan of Mosul. As a widower, he became a monk at St. Matthew's Monastery before 1784. He lived in Bartulli where he completed the transcription of *The Chariot of Mysteries*.<sup>401</sup> On March 25, 1806, Patriarch Matta ordained him a bishop with the name of Dioscorus Yuhanna. In his *systatikon* (letter of commendation), he called him a metropolitan and a Catholicos (sic). He authorized him to ordain bishops and metropolitans. He sent him as an Apostolic Delegate to India. He was accompanied by his son the deacon Antonius.

Dioscorus Yuhanna arrived in Cochin and immediately proceeded to the house of Maphryono Shukr Allah which has been occupied by the condemned Gurgis the Anjoorian and his companion Korola. They prevented him from entering the house claiming that it was their property. He went to stay as a guest with Jacob, a Syrian faithful. He filed a suit against the occupants, and the court issued a verdict that Dionysius, metropolitan of Malabar, and Dioscorus who was delegated by Antioch, were the lawful owners of the house of the maphryono. Gurgis the Anjoorian and Korola were evicted. The House was handed over to Dioscorus.<sup>402</sup>

When Dionysius 1, metropolitan of Malabar, who was then residing at Kandanad, learned of Dioscorus's arrival, he sent Rabban Philip of Kayankulam and priest Jonah to welcome him and invite him to come to his residence. But Dioscorus refused to accompany them. Rather, he addressed a letter to Dionysius that he would not come to see him unless he sent him first the episcopal vestment. Again, Dionysius sent the priests Joseph and Gurgis with a chest cross and a letter inviting Dioscorus to the church of the Virgin in Kandanad. He said that he should first proceed to Kollam according to the raja's order, and therefore, cannot come to see Dioscorus immediately. Furthermore, he cannot send him the vestment he mentioned because it is deposited in a faraway place. If perchance, he found a surplus cross among the church articles, he would send it to him.<sup>403</sup> Upon receiving the message Dioscorus accompanied the two priests to see Dionysius. When Dionysius asked him to present the letter of his authorization by the patriarch to the churches of Malabar, Dioscorus presented a paper written

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<sup>401</sup> By Maphryono Basilus Simon murdered by the wicked Kurdish 'Abdal Agha on April 6, in 1740. TRANS.

<sup>402</sup> See the tract on the church of Malabar written in 1842.

<sup>403</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.



in Arabic. This caused a controversy between the two dignitaries. Dioscorus went his own way touring the churches alone. At the end of 1807, he sent his son back to the Za'faran Monastery with a letter to Patriarch Matta saying that the Syrians have seventy-two churches in Malabar. He asked the patriarch to send bishops to Malabar because there was no Syrian bishop in the country at that time. The patriarch replied on January 15, 1808 praising his zeal toward the Syrians of Malabar and blessing his son the deacon Antonius. He promised to delegate to Malabar a maphryono, metropolitans, monks and deacons with letters written in Syriac containing his blessing of the congregations of Malabar. He also promised to send with them and a quantity of the Holy Chrism what they needed for the journey in the spring lest they suffer fatigue on the road. He sent the letter with the deacon Antonius and provided him with a jar of the Holy Chrism to be used until the arrival of the clergy he was to delegate to Malabar.<sup>404</sup>

Meantime, a conflict ensued between Dioscorus and some clergy and laymen in which the Protestants (Anglicans), for self interest, played a big role. Their purpose was to sever the relations between the church of Malabar and the Apostolic See. At last, The British Resident, Col. Macaulay, sent back Dioscorus to the patriarch. He ordered Dionysius not to give him any amount of money from now on. Dioscorus went to stay in Cochin until some Syrians came from southern Travancore and took him back in their boat to the city. Col. Macaulay sent a soldier and brought him back to Cochin and deported him to the residence of the Patriarch of Antioch on April 3, 1809.<sup>405</sup> Following is a summary of the letter sent from the Church of the Mother of God at Fotico, Malabar to the Apostolic See dated August 6, 1811. It was signed by the priest Abraham Konat of the church of the Chief Angel Mar Mikha'il (Michael), vindicating the Syrians of Malabar.

The letter stated, "In 1806, Metropolitan Dioscorus accompanied by Deacon Antonius came unto us. We asked him for the *systasticon* sent by Mar Ignatius to the churches of Malabar. He only presented a paper written in Turkish.<sup>406</sup> Moreover, he brought no gold or silver vessels to be used by the chief priest, except for books of the morning and evening prayers and a commentary on the Psalms. Afterwards, he quarreled with our metropolitan

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<sup>404</sup> According to the records of Patriarch Matta at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>405</sup> P. C. Cheriyan, *The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society, 1818–1840* (Kottayam, 1935), 57.

<sup>406</sup> Arabic. TRANS.

because of the *yystaticon*. He toured the churches quarreling with the priests and deacons. Upon learning of his behavior, the governor (Col. Macaulay) summoned him and deported him to you.”<sup>407</sup>

It is thought that Dioscorus was still living in 1818 and passed away in Tur ‘Abdin. We learn this from his son Antonius, who was ordained a deacon before this year. He mentioned his father’s name and said that he died in 1823.<sup>408</sup>

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DIONYSIUS I

Dionysius was born in the first half of the eighteenth century to the Pakalomattam family and was called Yusuf (Joseph). He was the grandson of the sister of Tuma V who claimed to be a bishop. He claimed to have been ordained a deacon by Tuma V in May, 1752, who also consecrated him a bishop in 1765 with the name Tuma VI to succeed him. In the middle of the year 1770, he submitted to the Apostolic See by effort of Metropolitan Gregorius Yuhanna of Ba Khudayda and Bishop Yuhanna of Mosul. These two dignitaries reordained him a bishop on May 29, 1770 and called him Dionysius at his reordination. He came to be known as Dionysius I because he was the first bishop of Malabar by this name. He, jointly with these dignitaries, administered the church. When Abraham the Anjoorian usurped the episcopate, Dionysius forced him to discard the bishop’s attire in the presence of a great assembly of clergy and laymen. He tore up the robes of some of his deacons and rendered them lay people. But he reordained some of Abraham’s priests lawfully according to church canons.<sup>409</sup> He also ordained many priests and deacons. During the Papal persecution in April, 1796, he celebrated the ordination of the monk Mathen from his own family a metropolitan with the name of Tuma VII to be his successor. He built some churches, especially the church at Pothencave which he constructed from his own money.<sup>410</sup>

Dionysius was an efficient and prudent administrator, and of graceful nature. He wore a long beard. Dr. Claudius Buchanan said the following

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<sup>407</sup> A copy of the letter is in my possession.

<sup>408</sup> See His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*. This history has been translated into English by Matti Moosa and presently under publication by Gorgias Press. TRANS.

<sup>409</sup> See a tract on the church of India written in 1841.

<sup>410</sup> Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, entire Chapter XVIII, 161–170. TRANS.

about him, "In every respect he is worthy of honor. He wore a purple dress of clear red color and a golden cross around his neck. His impressive beard flowed down to his waist. I thought that I was in front of John Chrysostom in the ancient church. I found him to be far superior in general learning to any of his clergy whom I had yet seen. He is eminent for his piety and for the attention he devotes to sacred functions."<sup>411</sup>

Dionysius was persecuted by the Papists who cast him into the prison of Alleppy in 1799. Therefore, we do not know how the Chaldean priest Butrus Nasri allowed himself to falsify the historical facts by leaning on a broken reed. He said, "Having quarreled with the Nuncio of the Franks, Dionysius became Jacobite (sic) and was followed by a multitude of people. (Syrians). When the news reached the two delegates of the See of Babylon in 1788, he paid them a visit and he and his congregation deserted Jacobitism. The Apostolic Nuncio was hesitant to admit him into his communion unless he agreed to remain for two years as a layman having no right to wear a bishop's habit."<sup>412</sup>

We believe that what we have already said in the previous chapters about Dionysius is sufficient to contradict these untenable claims

In his last days, Dionysius concerned himself with the translation of the Gospels into the Malayalam. He asked the zealous Syrian monk Philip of Kayamkulam to undertake the project. Philip proceeded with the translation supervised by Dionysius. It was printed by Dr. Buchanan in Bombay and distributed to the Syrian churches.

Dionysius, however, is to blame for supporting some trouble makers against Metropolitan Dioscorus Yuhanna of Mosul who was deported to the Apostolic See. It was nothing but a Protestant (Anglican) stratagem.

On March 25, 1808, Dionysius passed away in Niranam, being eighty years old. He was buried in the church of Puthencave as he had requested.<sup>413</sup>

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE ANJOORIANS

We have previously said that the monk Abraham Kattumangat of Mulanthuruthi had usurped the episcopal office claiming that Metropolitan Gregorius of Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh) ordained him a bishop. We have also seen that Iyawannis and Dionysius forced him to shed the episcopal attire

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<sup>411</sup> E. M. Philip, *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>412</sup> Butrus Nasri, *Dhakbirat al-Adhban*, 2: 376.

<sup>413</sup> Philip, 170.

when the Dutch Company issued a verdict that he was not a bishop and had no right to enjoy episcopal privileges. Finally, he fled to the region controlled by the Company and established a center at Anjoor (Thoziyur). Let us now return to this seceding group (Anjoorians) for their relations with the Syrian church of Malabar.

Abraham resided in Anjoor of the province of Calicut where he learned sorcery under a Muslim Shaykh called Asur Todi. He was sought by childless and mentally deranged women who offered him money for healing. Under him studied some self-seeking men.<sup>414</sup>

In 1790, Tipu, sultan of Mysore, invaded Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar. He persecuted the Christians forcing some to circumcise. Among these was the priest Yusuf Pulikkot of Kunnamkulam. Yusuf fled to join Abraham. Then he and Yusuf escaped to Krinkashara in Cochin. But the king of Cochin fined them six thousand *Pothan* (roughly 375 rupees). He forced Yusuf to discard the monastic habit. Having repented, Yusuf returned to his church and was received as a priest.<sup>415</sup> The Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal said, "Since he was circumcised by the Muslims, Yusuf abstained from eating meat, fish, butter, milk and rice. He ate only legumes. He ceased rubbing his body with oil as required by the climate of Malabar and kept persisting in prayer."<sup>416</sup>

Abraham returned to Anjoor (Thoziyur). In 1794, he invested the priest Gurgis, his younger half-brother (on his mother's side), with a bishop's habit and called him Cyril II. Shortly afterwards, Gurgis became paralytic hardly able to walk, and passed away. When this happened, Abraham ordained his namesake Abraham, son of his younger half-brother Yuhanna, a deacon and then a priest. When he asked the young man to wear the bishop's habit, he refused saying that he would be rejected and mocked by the congregation. The young man went to Dionysius I, and received from him the legitimate ordination of a deacon and then a priest. The congregation of Mulanthuruthi welcomed him as a priest in their church.<sup>417</sup>

About this time, a corrupt young man called Corola, son of Matta Pannoyli, from Kottayam who was residing in Kandanad, went to see Abraham. A few days later, Abraham unlawfully ordained him a bishop with

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<sup>414</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>415</sup> See a tract by the priest Philip Edavazhikal and a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1840.

<sup>416</sup> See a tract at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>417</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

the name of Iyawannis despite that he was married. He also taught him magic.<sup>418</sup>

On June 27, 1802, Abraham died and was buried in his house in Anjoor. Corola, unlawfully ordained a priest called Zechariah (Cheron) as a bishop with the name of Philoxenus. Zechariah was a son of Chern in whose house Abraham resided in Anjoor. He was already ordained a deacon and then a priest by Dionyus I.<sup>419</sup>

Later, Corola and the paralytic Gurgis, went to the home of the latter in Mulanthuruthi. Corola died on the road and his body was taken to Anjoor and buried in Abraham's house. Gurgis reached his house where he died in 1807 and was buried in the Church of the Cross in Vitaikal.<sup>420</sup>

A few years later, Zechariah (Chern) became sick and was visited by Gurgis Kernikam, of the church of Arthat-Kunnamkulam. Shortly before his death, Zechariah ordained Gurgis a bishop with the name of Philoxenus II, who played an important role in the history of the Syrian church as shall be seen later.

## **CHAPTR SIX: TUMA VIII AND THE DISCONTINUANCE OF THE CHAIN OF LEADERS OF THE PAKALOMATTAM FAMILY**

We have already seen that in April, 1796 and during the papal persecution, Dionyus I ordained Tuma VII, from the Pakalomattam family, a bishop to succeed him. He was assisted by Tuma until 1808 when he went to his Lord. Tuma VII ministered the church independently for one year. He passed away on June 20, 1809 and was buried in the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Kolancheri. It was said that he was a man of piety who adhered tenaciously to religion. On his death bed he sank into a coma. Those present raised his hand and placed it on the head of a priest from the female line of the Pakalomattam family declaring him as Bishop Tuma VIII. They hoped that he would receive later canonical ordination from the Fathers delegated by the Apostolic See. Meantime, they appealed to the British Resident Col. Macaulay, to urge the Apostolic See to send a chief priest (to Malabar).

Tuma VIII was assisted in the administration of the church by the monks Philip of Kayamkulam and Joseph Polycot of Kunnamkulam.

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<sup>418</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>419</sup> See a tract of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat, still in manuscript form, and a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>420</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1841.

Things went smoothly but no delegate was yet sent by the Apostolic See. Joseph strongly urged Tuma VIII to contact the Apostolic See in order to send a metropolitan, but to no avail. Frustrated by Tuma's inaction, Joseph and Philip deserted him and they split into two antagonistic factions. Joseph and his faction maintained that Tuma VIII should not administer the church until he received a canonical ordination from the delegate of the Apostolic See. Philip and his faction said that since the church is bereft of its lawful leader (Dionysius I), Tuma VIII should keep administering the church until a delegate of the Apostolic See had arrived in Malabar. When the controversy intensified, the two factions appealed to Macaulay to decide the matter. Macaulay could not take action because he was about to leave for Travancroe.<sup>421</sup>

In 1810, Macaulay retired and was succeeded by Col. John Munro as Resident in Travancore. In the meantime, the dispute between Joseph and Tuma VIII reached the British government in Madras. The government addressed, through Col. Munro, seventeen questions to Tuma VIII most of which concerned the history and condition of the church of Malabar. On April 20, 1812, Tuma answered these questions with a copy attached by Dionysius Joseph to the case filed by the Seminary in Kottayam under No. W W. Following is the most important of these questions and their answers.

To the question about the origin and history of the church of Malabar, Tuma VIII referred to the preaching of St. Thomas, his martyrdom in Mylapore and the conversion of several Brahmin families to Christianity. He also referred to the immigration of Syrian families to Malabar in the year 345.

Concerning supremacy over the church of Malabar, Tuma VIII said that this church has always been subject to the See of Antioch. Since the arrival of Tuma of Cana in 345, the delegates of the See of Antioch ordained bishops for Malabar.

As to the number of churches, congregations and priests and their services, he replied that under his authority there are at present fifty-five churches, one hundred sixty-seven clergyman and thirty thousand parishioners. The priests celebrate the Holy Eucharist on Sundays and festival days and perform the Sacraments of baptism, confessions, matrimony and extreme unction. They also perform daily morning and evening prayers in the churches and receive fees for their services especially for the Eucharist celebrated for the souls of the deceased. He went on to say that in general,

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<sup>421</sup> Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 171–172.

some priests are selected as deputies because of their knowledge of the Scriptures and service books. The study of the Scriptures is a part of the clerical curriculum. Three teachers are appointed to instruct the clergy. One teacher is appointed to teach in the northern region, and the other two in the southern region. He continued that some of the priests were well versed in both Testaments. A great number of them are well versed in the four Gospels.

With reference to the finances of the church, Tuma said that churches have no properties, and that their income consists of fees of burials, weddings and dowries. They are inadequate for the daily maintenance of the churches. In addition, some churches' trustees are dishonest.

Concerning the education of laity, Tuma said that they have no middle schools of education. But the teaching of the church's doctrine, the teaching of the Apostles and the teaching of the three hundred and eighteen fathers<sup>422</sup> and the performance of religious services, are done according to the books provided them from time to time by the See of Antioch.

According to mission work, Tuma said that very few pagans convert to Christianity. But no Syrian has receded to paganism.

Concerning government officials, he said that not only do the Syrians often suffer from their oppression and mistreatment in religious matters only, but in other matters as well.

The last question concerning the ancientness of the Pakalomattam family, Tuma VIII answered that since 345, that is for three thousand eight years, most of the archdeacons of the church of Malabar came from this family. Since the Portuguese period ended and up to his own time, six bishops, other than him, came from this family.<sup>423</sup>

In 1813, the conflict between Tuma VIII and monk Joseph intensified. Col. Munro called upon the churches to send delegates to a meeting in Kollam to meet with him. He was probably urged to call a meeting by the Anjoorian Philoxenus II Gurgis who had visited Munro this year at Tricur<sup>424</sup> Philoxenus was a close friend of the monk Joseph. After some deliberation, Munro declared that Tuma's position as a bishop was invalid. He forbade him from administering the church until he received canonical ordination

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<sup>422</sup> Of the Council of Nicaea. TRANS.

<sup>423</sup> See the law suit of the Seminary of Kottayam, 3: 155–161 and Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 172–174. For a full text of these questions see Philip, *Ibid.*, Appendix VI, 352–353. TRANS.

<sup>424</sup> In the state of Cochin. TRANS.

by the See of Antioch.<sup>425</sup> Frustrated, Tuma ordained his relative the priest Aipen a bishop as Tuma IX to succeed him. He passed away on March 12, 1816. Soon, however, Tuma IX was forced to resign his position. He surrendered the properties of his predecessors to the Seminary at Kottayam and went to live in the church of Kadamattam as a priest devout to ascetic living. With his death, the succession of bishops of the Pakalomattam family was discontinued.<sup>426</sup> The Chorepiscopus Philip says that the bishops from Tuma I until Joseph (Dionysius II) were not true bishops but businessmen selling the faith and ordinations for silver.<sup>427</sup>

### **CHAPTER SEVEN: THE MONK JOSEPH ESTABLISHES A SEMINARY AT KOTTAYAM**

About 1806, a serious conflict ensued between Col. Macaulay and the government of Travancore. Macaulay was immensely perplexed about how to deal with this conflict since his government could offer him no help. So, he borrowed an amount of money from his two friends the Syrian Dionysius I, and the Latin bishop of Verapoly. When the conflict subsided and Macaulay received help from his government, he deposited, on December 1, 1808, an amount of 10, 500 rupees in the British Bank of Madras at 8% interest for the benefit of the Syrian church. The money was meant to be spent on charitable or religious projects, especially the education of Syrian clergymen.

In this year (1806), Dionysius I died and was succeeded by Tuma VII. Five months later, Macaulay wrote a check in the above mentioned amount for Tuma VII. He also deposited an equivalent amount in the same bank for the benefit of the Catholics, provided that the interest should be cashed by the bishop of Verapoly.<sup>428</sup>

At this time, the monk Joseph Pulikkott was at the church of Arthat in Kunnamkulam. After restoring this church which the army of Tipu Sultan of Mysore had destroyed, he began making rounds of the churches of the north. In his sermons, he urged the parishioners to establish a Syrian institute for educating the clergy. Being competent in geometry, he made a blueprint for such institute. At the beginning, Tuma VIII agreed with him but then turned against him when Joseph asked him to fund this vital project from the interest he received from the British Bank of Madras. This was the

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<sup>425</sup> Philip, *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>426</sup> Philip, *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>427</sup> See a tract at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>428</sup> Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 170.



first reason for the conflict between these two men which yielded deplorable consequences. When Joseph found no other means to accomplish the project, he turned to Col. Munro for help. He proposed to Munro his objective and showed him the plan of the projected institute. Pleased, Munro offered him four years accumulation of interest of the deposited amount totaling 3160 rupees. It should be kept in mind, however, that Tuma VIII had not yet received a canonical ordination as a bishop. In the meantime, the government of Travancore offered a large tax free piece of land in Kottayam for the building of the institute. Taking advantage of this golden opportunity, Joseph laid the foundation of the building in February, 1813. The edifice, consisting of three stories, was completed in one year. In March, 1815, the religious institute (The Seminary) opened its doors for the Syrian clergy. We shall have more to say about it later.<sup>429</sup>

## CHAPTER EIGHT: MONK JOSEPH BECOMES DIONYSIUS II

Col. Macaulay deposited the money in the Government Bank of Madras with the condition that only a lawfully ordained bishop should cash its interest. Thus, Col. Munro, who succeeded him, did not pay Tuma VIII an interest because he was not canonically ordained. But, we have also seen him violate this requisite by paying the interest to a monk<sup>430</sup> who was unworthy to receive it. His action was but a stratagem to cause the Syrian church trouble and drive it into the ditch of Protestantism, as shall be seen later. After monk (Joseph) spent the money on building the Seminary, the British Government of Madras expressed displeasure at the colonel's decision for paying the interest to someone not canonically ordained a bishop. It was particularly dissatisfied because Col. Munro acted without its knowledge. It offered monk Joseph two choices: either to accept the episcopate from Philoxenus II, the Anjoorina, or repay the interest he had received from the treasury of the chancellor (Munro).

The question is that if Col. Munro had already paid the interest to the monk Joseph without the knowledge of his government, as it alleges, why should it ask the monk to pay back interest? What is not right in this case is that the government should have asked Munro to repay the interest to the treasury from his own pocket? This was not done, however, because the

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<sup>429</sup> Philip devoted all of Chapter XX to the founding of the Seminary. The author has apparently summarized Philip's account. See Philip, *Ibid.*, 176–196. TRANS.

<sup>430</sup> Joseph in this context. TRANS.

Anjoorian Philoxenus had paid a visit to Col. Munro in Trichor as was previously said. Philoxenus himself was a self claimed bishop who succeeded a chain of self proclaimed bishops who had usurped the episcopate by illegal means. This is not to mention his Protestant (Anglican) proclivities. If Col. Munro had considered unlawful the office of Tuma VIII because it was not legalized by a delegate of the Apostolic See, how could he and his government permit themselves to suppress the right of the church of Malabar and compel it to commit such a shameful act despite that this church had condemned the Anjoorians since the time of Dionysius I? Was not the purpose of their action to encroach upon church rules as a prelude to alienate the church of Malabar from its mother Church of Antioch in order to render it their cold prey?

In order to get out of this dilemma, monk Joseph accepted the alleged office of the episcopate from Philoxenus the Anjoorian on March 9, 1815 with the name of Dionysius II, much to the joy of the British government. The government of Travancore issued a royal decree on January 21, 1816, considering Dionysius II a legitimate bishop and ordered the Syrians to submit to his authority. It was followed by a similar decree from the government of Cochin. This was done despite the fact that the Syrians had already addressed a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch appealing to him to send them a metropolitan. They entrusted Munro to deliver it to the patriarch.<sup>431</sup> But Munro was promoting the plans of the Protestant missionaries as evidenced from the letter he addressed to Thompson, secretary of the Communications Committee of the Church Missionary Society in Madras. In this letter, he says that he was sad for the internecine controversies among the Syrians which had intensified since monk Joseph was chosen for the episcopate. He therefore expected, within a few months, to meet with church leaders to solve the conflict.<sup>432</sup>

Since then, the rulers of Travancore and Cochin began to interfere in the appointment and removal of the bishops of Malabar. Indeed, a bishop not endorsed by the government could not exercise the duties of his office, even if he were elected by the entire church. Moreover, winning the friendship of the British Resident was sufficient for the pagan government to recognize the valid position of the bishop although he was illegally ordained, or, at best, lawfully chosen according to canon law. What was expected of him is to gain the favor of the Church Missionary Society, the puppet of the

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<sup>431</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar written in 1840.

<sup>432</sup> Cheriyan, *The Syrians of Malabar and the Protestant Mission*, 341.

Resident. As to the hapless Syrian people, they were only expected to submit unconditionally to the royal decrees. In case the government endorsed a bishop, and a member of the congregations opposed him, he will definitely be punished. Thus, were subdued the rights of the Syrian people of Malabar in their selection of bishops.

Col. Munro delegated Tuma IX to Dionysius II to have him discard the bishop's robe.<sup>433</sup> Dionysius received substantial aid from Munro and from the native government too. Through Munro, however, the Syrian people enjoyed social freedom since he outwardly pretended to love the Syrian church. In fact, he was motivated by political expediency as shown by the report he submitted to the British government of Madras on March 30, 1818. In this report he asked aid for the Syrian people saying, "The British government will receive in return the assistance of the Syrians."<sup>434</sup>

## CHAPTER NINE: THE SO-CALLED DIONYSIUS II AND THE PROTESTANTS

About this time, within two months, the English Bishop Middleton paid two visits to Travancore. They were followed immediately by the introduction of the first Protestant mission. A few days before the death of Dionysius II, a second letter arrived in Travancore. Thus, Col. Munro introduced the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society into the church of Malabar.<sup>435</sup> He invited Dionysius II to Kollam (Quilon). Dionysius proceeded with two priests, Gurgis of Ponnatra, of the church at Kottayam and the deacon Philip Edavzhickal (later the renowned priest Philip).<sup>436</sup> The first day of the meeting passed in obvious friendliness. Munro invited Philip to come again on the next day. This time, Resident Munro expressed his desire to appoint an English bishop to the Seminary to serve as a liaison between

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<sup>433</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>434</sup> I find it appropriate to produce the full passage as recorded by E. M. Philip who had an access to Munro's report to the British government of Madras. Philip says, "The British government would receive, in their (the Syrians) grateful and devoted attachment on every emergency, the reward due to its benevolence and wisdom." See Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 180.

<sup>435</sup> See his letter addressed from Courtallum on August 7, 1815 to Marmaduke Thompson, secretary of the corresponding committee of the Church Mission Society of Madras in Cheriyan, 339–341.

<sup>436</sup> He is the grandfather of the historian E. M. Philip. See E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 180. TRANS.

him and Dionysius II. He then introduced Dionysius to Rev. Norton saying that he would reside in the Seminary and work for the religious and social promotion of the Syrian community. Momentarily, Dionysius appreciated the idea but objected because Rev. Norton was of different creed and his faith and the faith of the Syrians are not the same. Thus, he cannot permit Norton to reside in the Seminary which might lead to feuds and deplorable consequences. Disappointed, Munro suggested that Norton should use Alleppy as a center of his activity. He told Dionysius, "Would not you ask the missionaries to visit the Seminary from time to time?" Dionysius reluctantly accepted the proposal. Upon returning home, he told the clergy with tears that he was deeply sorry for accepting aid from the Resident for the construction of the Seminary. Later he declared, "I repent having sought the Sahib's help in the construction of the Seminary. Since the days of Dr. Buchanan, the eyes of Europeans are fixed on our poor Church as those of a kite upon chickens; God knows the end. As long as I live, I will, under God's guidance, guard this poor church. May God preserve it forever?"<sup>437</sup> Some claim that Joseph (Dionysius II) himself went to see Munro pledging to bring his entire community to the fold of the Protestants (Church of England), if Munro made him a Metropolitan of Malabar.<sup>438</sup>

On November 12, 1816, Dionysius II died and was buried in the chapel of the Syrian Seminary.<sup>439</sup> Yet, historian Philip vindicates him saying, "He did not aspire to episcopacy, and but for the necessity of drawing the interest on the endowment fund from the Residency, he would gladly have ended his days as a mere Ramban (monk). Having been consecrated by a bishop who was not an authorized delegate of the Patriarch, he doubted the validity of his title as a bishop. Consequently, he declined to exercise any of the sacerdotal powers of a bishop."<sup>440</sup> He lauds him for piety, good intention and love of the church saying, "In fact, he was the pioneer of education, not only in the Syrian community, but throughout the whole of the native states of Travancore and Cochin, in as much as the Seminary he built at Kottayam was the first educational institution of the kind in the country; the old Granganore and Vaipicottah Seminaries of the Portuguese period (which had long since ceased to exist) being of course, excepted."<sup>441</sup> The

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<sup>437</sup> E. M. Philip. *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 181–182.

<sup>438</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar written in 1841.

<sup>439</sup> This is the Seminary at Kottayam. TRANS.

<sup>440</sup> E. M. Philip. *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 179.

<sup>441</sup> Philip, 179.

Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal said about Dionysius II that, “He did not wrong any one He only rebuked the transgressors of the orthodox faith and the order of the holy church.”

## CHAPTER TEN: THE SO-CALLED DIONYSIUS III AND THE PROTESTANTS

Upon the death of Dionysius II, Philoxenus II of Anjoor (Thoziyur) arrived in Travancore. By the instigation of the Resident, he appropriated the title of a Metropolitan. Immediately, he was endorsed in this capacity by the governments of Travancore and Cochin. In a letter addressed to Thompson dated January 22, 1817, Col. Munro said, “You will have heard from Mr. Norton, that the Bishop Joseph died some time ago and has been succeeded by a Bishop named Philoxenus. The new bishop manifests the best disposition, and is anxious for the assistance and co-operation of the missionaries.”<sup>442</sup> On October 26, 1817, the Vicar General invested Gurgis (George) Ponnatra, disciple of the priest Malphono (doctor) Abraham of Konat, with the office of illegal bishophood with the name of Dionysius III.<sup>443</sup> Gurgis returned to Thoziyur without relinquishing the title of “Metropolitan.” Shortly afterwards, a royal decree was issued announcing the appointment of Dionysius III as assistant to Philoxenus and enjoining upon all the Syrians to submit to his authority.<sup>444</sup> Thus, the Anglican missionaries were given a free hand to operate within the Syrian church. Of these missionaries were the Rev. Joseph Fenn and Rev. Henry Baker. Another missionary, Benjamin Baker, became the Principal of the Seminary and a Joint Manager with Dionysius III in administering the church. He even signed the letters Dionysius addressed to the Syrian churches. Joseph Fenn proceeded to establish parochial schools. On his part, Henry Baker took charge of the translation of the Bible and other religious books into Malayalam. Through them, Dionysius III secured great influence with Col. Munro. In his capacity as Resident, Munro appointed competent Syrians to high positions as judges, magistrates and tax collectors and other responsible posts. Dionysius became so powerful that a mere recommendation by him was sufficient to get an applicant a position in the government. Hindu officials trembled in his presence. The *Rani* (Queen) of Travancore offered him a

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<sup>442</sup> Cheriyan, 343.

<sup>443</sup> Tract of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat still in manuscript form, and E. M. Philip, 183. TRANS.

<sup>444</sup> E. M. Philip, 183. TRANS.

grant of 21,000 rupees and an orchard for the support of the Seminary yielding thousands of rupees annually. In addition to the Syriac and Malayalam languages, English, Sanskrit, Latin and Hebrew were taught. In time, the missionaries began to administer the funds of the Seminary jointly with the Syrian Bishop.

Not satisfied with what they have gained, the missionaries wanted to lay hands on the churches jointly possessed by the Syrian Orthodox and the papal Syrians. Of these were the great church of Valiapally and Piravam at Kottayam and the churches of Alleppy and Changancherry which have been once chapels attached to the church of Niranam. They succeeded in obtaining a royal decree to hand these churches to the missionary Fenn. He expelled the Catholics from the churches of Kottayam and Piravam easily. But it was not so easy to evict them from the other two churches because they were under their control for generations. Furthermore, assisted by the government and the Syrians, Fenn took possession of these churches and appointed a Syrian priest to perform religious services at the Changanacherry church. But no sooner the missionaries and the government officials withdrew, than the Catholics congregated and retrieved the church. When Fenn heard the news he wanted to recapture the church. He went to the site with a contingent of troops who arrested the Catholic Vicar General who came to help his people. Fenn failed to recapture the church because the men and women of the congregation decided to stay in it even if it cost them their lives. Finally, Fenn withdrew discomfited.

Meantime, Col. Munro was succeeded by Col. M<sup>r</sup> Douall, and at his behest, Fenn left the churches at Alleppy and Changancherry.<sup>445</sup>

The missionaries had full freedom within the Syrian church. They preached at will without opposition. They abolished some traditional and noble usages. Considering themselves to be the proprietors and administrators of the Syrian church, they removed the images and icons from the churches.<sup>446</sup> They acted as if they had the right to dictate faith and traditions to the Syrians. In order to introduce their own Protestant (Anglican) teaching into the church, they called for a meeting at Mavelikara on October 3, 1818. They proposed the removal from prayers the name of the Virgin

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<sup>445</sup> All of the above information is taken from Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 183–185. TRANS.

<sup>446</sup> The Syrian Church forbids the use of images and icons. Some churches, however, do have them but the people never worship them or pay homage to them. They are simply considered as religious ornaments. TRANS.

Mary<sup>447</sup> and a radical revision of the Liturgy.<sup>448</sup> They did not succeed because the community did not accept their action. Dionysius III, who until then had some confidence in the missionaries, began to suspect their intentions.<sup>449</sup>

Realizing that his ordination as bishop was uncanonical, Dionysius III addressed a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch asking him to delegate a metropolitan immediately to legalize his ordination. He sent the letter through James Hough, author of *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. 2, 389 and Philip.<sup>450</sup> He also wrote privately to the patriarch about the same. But before receiving a reply, Dionysius III died from cholera on May 5, 1825 being forty years old. He was buried in the parish church of Cheriapally at Kottayam.<sup>451</sup>

It is said that although Dionysius III pretended to be a friend of the Protestant missionaries, inwardly he was suspicious of their intentions. Before attending the meeting at Mavelikara in 1818, he went to pray at the Cheripally church. As he was about to step into the boat, he confidently said to his friends in his company, "I am standing on the brink. Tomorrow I must either fall out with the *sabibs* or betray my Church. They want to change our faith. I would rather lose my honor than become a traitor. Pray for me that I may pass through the ordeal unscathed."<sup>452</sup>

Rev. James Hough discussed at length with Dionysius III the changes the missionaries intended to affect in the church. They were related by a missionary who said that, "The Metropolitan (Dionysius) never commits himself. He approves of what is done, but shows no indications to go beyond the canons of his Church."<sup>453</sup>

Rev. Joseph Fenn said that Dionysius contended with him defending the Virginity of Mary and the excellence of virginity (celibacy) over marriage.<sup>454</sup> Digby Mackworth said that Dionysius handed him a Syriac copy of

<sup>447</sup> As Mother of God. TRANS.

<sup>448</sup> See the *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East for 1819–1820*, 344–345, and Philip. *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>449</sup> Philip, *Ibid.*, 184–185.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>451</sup> Philip. *Ibid.*, 186. TRANS.

<sup>452</sup> Philip, 186.

<sup>453</sup> Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East*, p. 108.

<sup>454</sup> Cheriyan, *The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society 1816–1840*, 109.

the New Testament in which he wrote a few lines in his handwriting, and beseeched him to deliver it to the Patriarch if possible.<sup>455</sup>

In a letter addressed in 1821 to Lord Gambier, President of the Church Missionary Society in England, Dionysius III styled himself as “Mor Dionysius, Metropolitan of the Syrians of Malabar and subject to the supremacy of Mor Ignatius Patriarch of the Apostolic See of Antioch who resides in Syria. The Syrian Church was rescued by the fathers delegated by Antioch, from different persecutions inflicted upon it by the Portuguese. These delegates, confirmed her in the orthodox faith.”<sup>456</sup>

### **Chapter Eleven: The Coming of Metropolitan Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih to Malabar**

As previously said, Dionysius III addressed a letter to the Patriarch of Antioch appealing to him to send a metropolitan to Malabar to canonize his dignity. After consulting with his bishops, Patriarch of Antioch Jirjis V of Aleppo, chose for this mission the Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Masih son of Yuhanna, son of Maqdisi Ayyub (Job) of Amid.

Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih became a monk at the Za’faran Monastery. He was ordained a priest in 1804 and a metropolitan for the Patriarchal Office in 1820. In 1822, he was appointed a metropolitan for the diocese of Damascus. On December 10, 1823, he was delegated to Malabar of India with three monk-priests of Amid. They are Ishaq Butrus, ‘Abd al-Ahad, son of the deacon Quryaqos Besh Ghrouh and Bishara Jeremiah of the family of Tarzi Khidr Shah.<sup>457</sup> The patriarch provided him with a letter dated November 29, 1823, addressed to the British authorities in India appealing to them to look after him. Here is a summary of the letter, “We decided to treat some of the issues concerning our Syrian sons subject to your authority. We have delegated Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Masih and the monk-priests Ishaq, ‘Abd al-Ahad and Bishara to meet with you. Since they are not familiar with the customs of those countries, we request you to give them a helping hand and instruct the rulers of the lands to look after them in their travels or domicile. We are specifically confident of your care for the Syrians

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<sup>455</sup> Cheriyan, *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>456</sup> *Missionary Register for 1822*, 431.

<sup>457</sup> See *Tarikh al-Abrashyyat al-Suryaniyya (History of Syrian Dioceses)* by His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum and the Register of Patriarch Jirjis V.



under your authority and the active assistance you render them. No doubt, you are the honorable British people.”<sup>458</sup>

Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih and his companions journeyed via Egypt which, was then afflicted by the plague. Shortly, the monks Ishaq and ‘Abd al-Ahad died and Athanasius and Bishara buried them in Mar Behnam’s Church in Cairo. Metropolitan Athanasius and Bishara remained in Egypt until 1825 and then departed in April via the Suez land route.<sup>459</sup> They arrived in Bombay in the summer of this year. At Bombay, Athanasius met with Reginald Heber, Anglican Bishop of Calcutta. Heber’s Chaplain, Thomas Robinson, in his reported letter to the Patriarch of Antioch says that Athanasius obtained from Heber instructions to the British authorities to look after him. Athanasius also addressed a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury informing him of his arrival in Malabar.<sup>460</sup>

On Novemebr 3, 1825 Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih arrived in Cochin and went directly to the church at Mattancheri. The Syrians, happy to see him come, flocked to meet him and seek his blessings.<sup>461</sup> Also, crowds from the churches of Kandanad, Karingachiran, Mulanthuruthi, Tammenna, Parur and Kuruppumpady flocked to welcome the metropolitan. On November 9, he left for Poniniakra for an audience with the British Resident Col. Newall. On the next day, he proceeded to the church of Kottayam.<sup>462</sup>

Dionysius III, who had requested the delegation of a metropolitan to Malabar, passed away six months before the arrival of Metropolitan Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih. He was succeeded by another one who assumed the title of Dionysius IV. Like his predecessor, Dionysius IV lacked the credentials of canonical ordination. He shall be discussed later.

Upon learning of Athanasius’ arrival in Kottayam, Dionysius IV journeyed from the south to meet with him. Meantime, Philoxenus the Anjoorian, journeyed from the north on November 21. Philoxenus followed the plan drawn for him by the British Resident and the Protestant missionaries which he circulated to the Syrian churches. He invited them to meet at

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<sup>458</sup> Joseph Ittoop Ritter, *History of the Syrian Chrsitians of Malabar*, 204, 206–218, and 301.

<sup>459</sup> See *The History of the Syrian Dioceses* by His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum, quoting the marginal note of monk Bishara on the *Book of Homilies* by Maphryono Simon at the Berlin Library MS 259.

<sup>460</sup> Joseph Ittoop, *History of the Syrians in Malabar*, 204, 206–218, and 301.

<sup>461</sup> This is according to the metrical ode of the priests Abraham Konat and Philip Edavazhika.

<sup>462</sup> Joseph Ittoop, *History of the Syrians in Malabar*, 204, 206–218, and 301.

the lesser church of Kottayam on Sunday December, 13 to hear the promulgation of the *systaticon*.<sup>463</sup> On this day, Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih celebrated the Holy Eucharist and the *systaticon* was read followed by the ceremony of his enthronement on the Metropolitan Seat. The attending crowds rushed to receive his blessing.<sup>464</sup> While the Syrian people were exceedingly joyful for the occasion, the Protestant missionaries were dejected. They realized that the authority of the See of Antioch was established while their plan of converting the Syrian church of Malabar to Anglicanism failed.<sup>465</sup> But they found a way to deport Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih same as happened earlier with Metropolitan Dioscorus Yuhanna of Mosul.<sup>466</sup>

## **CHAPTER TWELVE: METROPOLITAN ‘ABD AL-MASIH DECLARES THE EPISCOPATES OF BOTH PHILOXENUS II THE ANJOORIAN AND DIONYSIUS IV INVALID**

Metropolitan Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih was authorized by the Patriarch of Antioch Jirjis V to deal with some issues of the church of Malabar, especially the ordination of bishops and granting the clergy of Malabar the canonical dignity of priesthood. One day while the monk Bishara visited the Seminary’s library he found an Arabic manuscript written by Bishop Iyawannis of Mosul. It contained the story of how Abraham (Gurgis) of the Kattomankat of Mulanthuruthi, usurped the dignity of bishop claiming that he was ordained by the laying on of hands of Metropolitan Yuhanna. It also shows how he was banished from Travancore and Cochin and founded a special diocese in Anjoor (Thoziyur).<sup>467</sup> Yuhanna further said that, “I tried my utmost to ascertain the truth from Gregorius but could not because he planted obstacles in my way.” Upon reading this episode, Metropolitan Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih called unto him Philoxenus the Anjootrian, a successor of Abraham and Dionysius IV, his protégé. He asked them to prove the validity of their ordination. They produced a document allegedly written by Gregorius Yuhanna. Upon reading it, Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Masih and the priest Philip Edavazhikal, found in it the following, “We ordained Raban Gurgis (Abraham) Kattomangat, who accompanied us and served us since we arrived in Malabar, a metropolitan with the name of Cyril. We

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<sup>463</sup> Letter of commendation. TRANS.

<sup>464</sup> Joseph Ittoop Ritter, 201.

<sup>465</sup> Philip, 188.

<sup>466</sup> Philip, 189–190. TRANS.

<sup>467</sup> Philip, 188.

granted him the authority invested in me by the Patriarch of Antioch.” Surprised, Athanasius said that this document was forged because Gregorius, who knew canon laws, could not have written it. Upon careful examination of the seal, he found that it was cut off from a letter of Gregorius and pasted on the document. He showed it to those present and informed the governor of Madras to this effect.<sup>468</sup> Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih issued a verdict forbidding these two men to wear the episcopal habit and stating that they should be reordained legally. He also forbade them to ordain priests and deacons because they were not lawful bishops.

Following is the dialogue between Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih and Philoxenus the Anjoorian derived from the metrical ode composed in the seven-meters of St. Ephraim by the two priests Abraham Konat and Philip Edavazhikal when they were imprisoned at Hasur in Travancore in 1826.

According to this ode, “When Athanasius saw the pretender Philoxenus Gurgis the Anjoorian wearing a crimson habit, girdled with a golden sash and a golden miter placed over his head, he was surprised and said to him, ‘Sit down you who are wearing a gorgeous crimson costume and tell me your story. Who are you? Philoxenus said harshly, ‘Don’t you know who I am? I am the metropolitan of Malabar.’ Athanasius said quietly, ‘And who ordained you and granted you this authority? Which governor does not know the king (raja) of this country? And what lawful metropolitan does not know the Patriarch Mar Ignatius who occupies the See of Antioch?’ Philoxenus produced a paper claiming that Gregorius Yuhanna had ordained the monk Abraham and his successors as bishops. It was signed by Gregorius Yuhanna, metropolitan of Jerusalem. To the letter was pasted two seals cut off from one of Gregorius’s letters. At this point, everyone realized that this was a forged document which came down from the monk Gurgis (Abraham) who had stolen the chest cross of the blind Gregorius Yuhanna, metropolitan of Jerusalem, and his staff at the moment of his death. Also, the Syrians, the strangers and the Franks were astonished at Philoxenus and said woe to him. Athanasius said to Philoxenus, ‘You have not lied to people but to the Holy Spirit which sanctifies the priesthood.’<sup>469</sup> Don’t you know that the Gospel says, ‘Anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.’<sup>470</sup> Don’t

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<sup>468</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>469</sup> Cf. Acts 5: 13. TRANS.

<sup>470</sup> Matthew 12: 32. TRANS.

you know that the Holy Fathers beginning with the Apostles, granted the mystery of the priesthood as they celebrated the Holy Eucharist? Without this, the priesthood cannot be consummated and the Holy Spirit will not descend upon the one who offers the sacrifice. In fact, the Book of Acts informs us that the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot be obtained or offered by money.<sup>471</sup> Hear what the malphono (teacher) of truth, Mar Balai says, 'The altar is fire, the sanctuary is fire, and the sacrifice is fire surrounding it. Fathers, be aware that you do not become consumed by fire. Wash your hands and cleanse your hearts and be pure and holy.' Did not the Seraph point to this sacrifice when he took a live coal with tongs from the altar? Isaiah did not dare pick it saying, 'Woe to me for I am unclean and deserve not the priestly office.'<sup>472</sup> Why shouldn't it be so, since Dionysius the Areopagite said that many saints did not venture to join the priesthood? Indeed, after so many struggles, St Ephraim accepted only the dignity of a deacon. Remember the Jew who touched the Ark of God which was only allowed for the priests to touch, how the angel struck him dead immediately.<sup>473</sup> According to a canon of the Apostles, 'Every one should remain in the dignity offered him until the end. He should not disturb the order of the church by appropriating the dignity of a bishop lest he angers God like Corah, Uzza and King Saul. Therefore, priests have no authority to ordain anyone.' The Teaching of the Apostles decrees, 'A bishop should be ordained by two or three bishops.' The canon of Simon of Cana decrees, 'Any bishop who ordains another bishop should be both removed from office.' Therefore, you should stop transgressing the canons of the church and begin to act like a priest lest your reward perish."<sup>474</sup>

At the beginning, a great number of priests ordained by Tuma VIII, Philoxenus the Anjoorian and Dionysius IV, wanted to accept canonical ordination from Athanasius. But when the conflict intensified, only those

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<sup>471</sup> Acts 8: 20. TRANS.

<sup>472</sup> Isaiah 6: 6–7. TRANS.

<sup>473</sup> The reference here is to 'Uzza who reached out and took hold of the arc of God because the oxen stumbled. The lord became angry against 'Uzza and struck him down because of his irreverent act. See 2 Samuel 6: 6–7. TRANS.

<sup>474</sup> A copy is with the family of Edavazhikal in Kottayam and another one in my possession. Most of these accounts took place between 1823 and 1889. They have been derived from original correspondences preserved in the home of Rev. Luke Edavazhikal of Cana in Kottayam, some of which are in my possession. Other sources derived from secondary letters are scanty, and referred to in their proper places.

who joined Athanasius received lawful ordination. The others returned to their vomit performing the services as before in violation of canonical laws.<sup>475</sup>

In a Syriac manuscript belonging to the priest Philip Edavazhikal, Metropolitan Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih wrote the following in Garshuni (Arabic written in Syriac script) stamped with his seal:

"In the year 2137 of the Greeks/1826 A. D., I, the wretched Metropolitan 'Abd al-Masih of Amid, came to Malabar by order of our Lord the Patriarch of Antioch Jirjis IV who occupies the See of Antioch in the prosperous Za'faran Monastery. I found in Malabar two blasphemers and liars who have become bishops by their own order. One of them, the mighty accursed Philoxenus, who ordained this Dionysius. Because of their iniquitous and blasphemy act, we punished them and excommunicated them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We also took this action according to the three Holy Councils, the order of our great Lord Patriarch Jirjis and my order I, the wretched. They shall be condemned and remain an object of the wrath of God. They shall be forbidden to serve forever and ever. Amen. We also, reordained nineteen priests who were ordained by these blasphemers. One of them is the priest Philip Edavazhikal."<sup>476</sup>

Moreover, Metropolitan 'Abd al-Masih removed the wooden images from the great church of Kottayam. He erected a splendid altar in the lesser church of the city similar to the one erected by Rabban Bishara in the church at Podepelli.<sup>477</sup>

As to Philoxenus the Anjoorian who had openly joined the Protestant (Anglican) propagandists, he was followed by nine simple and unlawful priests like himself led by Joseph of the village of Kallopra. They were joined by some lay people mostly liars who loved silver. They, in collaboration with the Protestants (Anglicans), were the cause of the deportation of Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih. They had him deported lest their wicked deeds be exposed as shall be seen shortly.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> Joseph Ittoop Ritter, 227.

<sup>476</sup> See the document given to priest Philip by Metropolitan 'Abd al-Masih on December 23, 2137 of the Greeks/1825 A. D. It is in the possession of the Edavazhikal family and a copy in my possession

<sup>477</sup> See a tract of the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>478</sup> See a tract of the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal and a metrical ode by the priests Abraham Konat and Philip Edavazhikal.

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE DEPORTATION OF METROPOLITAN 'ABD AL-MASIH OF AMID FROM MALABAR

Although Reginald Heber, Anglican Bishop of Calcutta, outwardly displayed joy over the coming of Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih to Malabar and instructed the British authorities to treat him with kindness, he inwardly, instigated his followers and the British Resident in Travancore to oppose him and obstruct his efforts. His intention was to eradicate the supremacy of the See of Antioch over the church of Malabar. He instructed some missionaries of the Church of England to ridicule Philoxenus and Dionysius for not being lawful bishops and have no dignity save wearing a red cloak. Accordingly, the missionaries went on disturbing the peace of the church of Malabar with the intention of exposing Athanasius as a trouble maker who is agitating the public. They succeeded in instigating Philoxenus and Dionysius to rebel against the Apostolic See (of Antioch) which forced Athanasius to condemn them. The missionaries incited them to reject the condemnation. They also addressed a petition in the name of the two condemned clerics, to the Resident Col. Newall who was ever ready to fulfill their desires. On his part, Athanasius informed the Resident and the Diwan (the Prime Minister) of the rebellion of Philoxenus and Dionysius and the forged *systaticon* they presented, but to no avail. It was then that Rabban (monk) Bishara and the priest Philip Edavazhikal went to Kollam to meet with the Diwan. Bishara showed him the forged *systaticon*, and related to him the rebellion of the two clerics. He found him to be polite and receptive. While at Kollam, the Anglican Rev. Joseph Fenn visited the Diwan and instigated him against Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih. Consequently, the Diwan issued a proclamation saying that, "I have been informed that some Syrians act against the Royal Decree which was issued in the name of Philoxenus. Therefore, anyone who violates it will be under the vehement wrath of the king (raja)." Afterwards, Dionysius wrote to all the churches forbidding from service the priests who supported Athanasius. Meantime Athanasius addressed letters to Bishop Heber and to the governor of Madras about the trouble caused by the Anglican vicars and the rebellion of Philoxenus and Dionysius and the forged *systaticon*. In response, Col. Newall issued an unjust order to deport Athanasius to his homeland on the ground that foreigners have no authority over the Syrians of Malabar. He gave the Syrians the choice either to endorse the two clerics Philoxenus and Dionysius or forfeit their right to reject them. The order was corroborated by the Diwan (Prime Minister.)

On September 27, 1826, the Diwan arrived in Kottayam and deliberated with the Anglican vicars, the Protestant propagandists and antagonists,

the deportation of Athanasius. Using police force, he had the priest Philip Edavazhikal of the great Kottayam Church, who was serving Athanasius, and the priest Gurgis of the lesser church of Kottayam, beaten and thrown into prison. Athanasius and the monk Bishara met with him to discuss the predicament of the two priests. Out of sheer malice, the Diwan ordered them to leave the country. Metropolitan Athanasius held him by the hand and said, "We did not come to this country with swords or sticks. If God wills, I shall see you sooner or later when Christ comes for judgment. Yes! I shall see you in his presence with these English vicars and the false bishops." Priest Philip Edavazhikal whom the Diwan released from prison served as an interpreter.

Athanasius returned to the lesser church of Kottayam. On the next day afternoon (September 28), the Diwan ordered the Chief Constable and the governor to evict Athanasius from Kottayam. But a great crowd of men and women thronged with cries of pain and sorrow which shook up the city. Athanasius repeated his condemnation of the rebels. He left Kottayam for Cochin where crowds of men and women paid him a visit shedding tears of grief. They were Syrians from the north where Kottayam was situated. They kept coming to see him and offering him their sympathy by words and deeds. They offered him money each according to his ability. But the Syrians from the south showed no sympathy toward him.

On March 28, 1827, Athanasius celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the house of Maphryono Shukr Allah in Cochin. He condemned the rebellious priests, who outwardly showed love for the Fathers of Antioch, but inwardly harbored deception and malice. On September 11, he boarded a ship carrying with him the forged *systatikon* to deliver to the Apostolic See.<sup>479</sup> Some say that on March 20, Athanasius was evicted from the lesser church of Kottayam by the government's force and that the government paid him one thousand *Kuli Panam* (a Malabar currency) for his passage.<sup>480</sup>

Upon arriving in his country, Athanasius submitted a detailed report to the Patriarch Jirjis V concerning his action in Malabar and the condition of the church in that country. Around 1841, Patriarch Elias II, appointed him to the diocese of Hattack. But he mostly resided in Diyarbakir. At the end of 1848, an epidemic afflicted Diyarbakir and Athanasius became its victim.

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<sup>479</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>480</sup> Joseph Ittoop Ritter, 203.

He was paralyzed until his death at the beginning of 1849. He was buried in the Church of Ka'biyya.<sup>481</sup>

In order to understand thoroughly the unjust treatment of Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih by the British officials, and their attempt to destroy the relations between the Apostolic See and the church of Malabar, we should read the letter of Venkata Rao, the Diwan, or Prime Minister of Travancore, addressed to Philoxenus the Anjoorian, dated June 15, 1826. In this letter, the Diwan asked Philoxenus to state his view as to the nature of punishment which the Qa'im Maqam (the second governor) should inflict upon the judge of the court of *Vicome*, who was a Syrian, because he visited Athanasius and kissed his hand according to the usual Syrian custom.<sup>482</sup> The Resident issued an order to arrest the few priests who adhered to Metropolitan Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih for their zeal toward the faith, and for their adherence to church laws and to the Apostolic See. He claimed that they have transgressed the royal decree which confirmed the authority of the rebellious Philoxenus and Dionysius. Evidently, the Resident took this action in response to their request. The priests were thrown into the prison of Hasur in Travancore.<sup>483</sup> Among them was the priest Abraham Konat, teacher of the church of Malamcherry and the priest Philip Edavazhikal who jointly composed a metrical ode in the Ephramite (seven-syllabic) meter containing the account of this sad event. From this ode we derived most of our information found in previous chapters.

When the government of Travancore found no charge against the detained priests, they had them write down their submission to Philoxenus and Dionysius, the so-called metropolitans of Malabar.<sup>484</sup> This was done against the declaration of the detained priests who said, "We shall not submit to Philoxenus and Dionysius the transgressors of propriety and church laws. As it is inappropriate to throw the Holy to dogs and the pearls to pigs, so, it is inappropriate for these two men to claim episcopal authority, especially that they have been condemned by the Lord, by Sts. Peter and Paul, by all the Apostles and by Mar Ignatius Patriarch Jirjis of Antioch. Woe to him (Philoxenus) who have usurped the name of St. Philoxenus of Ma-

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<sup>481</sup> See *History of the Syrian Dioceses* by His Holiness Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum.

<sup>482</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 190.

<sup>483</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal and E. M. Philip. 190.

<sup>484</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.



bug.”<sup>485</sup> The government imposed on them a heavy fine and released them after ten months of detention<sup>486</sup> from February to November.

The priests under discussion are Abraham Konat and Philip Edavazhikal, each of whom was fined 540 dinars (a currency of Malabar). Other detainees are Gurgis, priest of the lesser church of Kottayam, Onojerry, priest of the church of Vadakara, Maramcherry, priest of the church of Kothamangalam, Yuhanna, priest of the church of Parut (Parum), Epp, priest of the church of Karmattam, Krikattail, priest of the church of Thompon, Ethipola, priest of Kayankulam, Zachariah, priest of the church of Puthupally, Jacob, priest of the same church and Zechariah, priest of the church of Manerkat.<sup>487</sup>

#### CHAPTER FOURTEEN: FORGED LETTERS

In the wake of deporting Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Masih, three letters appeared in the name of Reginald, bishop of Calcutta. They were forged after his death by his secretary Thomas Robinson. The first written in December, 1825, delivered from Calcutta to Kottayam, was addressed to, “Mar Athanasius the honorable and wise bishop and metropolitan of all the churches of Christ in India which observe the Syriac rite.” The bishop of Calcutta promised Athanasius to visit the Syrian churches of Malabar and witness their rituals and prayers. He warns him against the missionaries of the bishop of Rome (the pope), namely the metropolitans of Goa and the bishop of Kodungallor and Verapoly who had persecuted the Indian church. He goes on to say that his Church of England had freed itself from their (the Catholics) tyranny long ago and that he is sending the letter in the company of John Doran, a member of his retinue. Attached to it, was a letter addressed to him by the Syrian Patriarch of Jerusalem carried by the Armenian Metropolitan Abraham who was delegated by the Anglican Patriarch of Jerusalem. The metropolitan had left the letter with him. He apologizes that he has found no one bound for Malabar to send it with him. He requests Athanasius to permit Rev. John to preach in the Syrian churches like other (Anglican) missionaries. Finally, he asks him to support mission work.

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<sup>485</sup> See the metrical ode of the priests Abraham Konat and Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>486</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal and E. M. Philip. 189.

<sup>487</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

The second letter, undated, is also addressed to Athanasius. It was written in the town of Alamberra in Koromandel. In it, the bishop of Calcutta informs Athanasius of his arrival in Madras where he received his letter. He expresses sorrow for the conflict created by the enemies between him and Philoxenus and Dionysius. But he defends the position of these two men and ridicules those who say they were unlawful metropolitans, and therefore, cannot bestow the Holy Spirit by the laying on of their hands. He goes on to say that these two men had administered the church of Travancore when news from Antioch was obfuscated for a long time. He says if it were not for these two men the sheep would have been scattered over the mountains. He calls them Metropolitans and proves this with cogent evidence. He expresses hope that they will eventually be made legitimate metropolitans, despite the fact that their present office as metropolitans is not invested by the See of Antioch. The bishop of Calcutta further says that he has instructed the governor of Madras to take care of him (Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih) and not to deport him. He asked him to write to this effect to the government of Madras and to the English Resident, and that the governor had responded to his request. He informs Athanasius that he is coming within forty days to convene a meeting in Kottayam. He insists that the meeting should be attended by Athanasius himself and those two rebels (Philoxenus and Dionysius) and the teachers and clergy of the churches in order to achieve peace. Finally, he asks Athanasius to convey his greetings to the monk Ishaq "who was our companion and yours too in Bombay."<sup>488</sup>

The third letter, dated March 27, 1826, was addressed to Philoxenus whom the Bishop of Calcutta calls a metropolitan and the shepherd of the Indian church which uphold the Syrian faith. He lauds him especially for choosing Dionysius as his successor. But he blames him for the feuds in Malabar which caused many people to leave the church and follow the teachings of the clergy of the Roman Catholic metropolitans of Kodungal-

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<sup>488</sup> It is clear from these letters that they were forged a long time after the deportation of Metropolitan Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih. In fact, the name of the monk who accompanied him to Malabar was not Ishaq but Bishara who was known by this name in Malabar. See the metrical ode by Abraham Konat and the priest Philip, and Philip's letter to Timothy, metropolitan of Edessa dated April 15, 1845 where the name of monk Ishaq is not mentioned. In fact, Ishaq had passed away in Egypt, as has been said earlier. It is likely that at a later date, the author of the letter read the Patriarchal Proclamation which mentions the names of three monks. He inserted the name of monk Ishaq not knowing which one of the three accompanied Athanasius from Bombay to Malabar.

lor and Verapoly. He feels sorry because what they did had grieved the people in past generations. He writes about the meeting, peace and his communication with Athanasius regarding the same subject.

There is still another undated fourth letter forged by Robinson. In this letter, addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch after the deportation of Athanasius, Reginald, Bishop of Calcutta, vindicates his own bishop and the Anglican missionaries from the charge of 'Abd al-Masih's deportation. He says, "In the previous year (1825) following Pentecost, Athanasius ('Abd al-Masih) met with him in Bombay. He was accompanied by a person who looks like a metropolitan. Reginald supplied him with instructions to the English government and informed Carilos, Archbishop of Canterbury about his coming." He goes on to summarize the three letters saying, "Unfortunately, the first two letters did not reach Athanasius. The first was returned by John and redelivered on March 4, the day Athanasius was deported; it should reach Travancore on the next day. It was not sent to Athanasius in Cochin although he had resided in the city for some time."

The second letter reached Travancore twenty days after this event. Still, Reginald wrote from Trichinopol to the Resident Col. Newall condemning the treatment of Athanasius. He says, "We should not imitate the disciples of the Church of Rome who had perpetrated similar abominable acts. This will do harm to the name of the English people." However, this letter and the order of the government to deport Athanasius did not reach Kottayam until Athanasius had already sailed out of Cochin.

This, then, is the gist of these forged letters. The whole purpose of their writing was sheer deception. Indeed, the bishop of Calcutta, the Resident and the Anglican missionaries had full understanding of these tragic matters. They coalesced to sever the relations between the See of Antioch and the Church of Malabar in order to render it as their cold prey. These letters were published by Joseph Ittoop Ritter in his *History of the Syrians of Malabar* (Cochin, 1869), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 206–227, to exonerate the English and their missionaries.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN: PHILOXENUS II, THE ANJOORIAN

Philoxenus is Gurgis (George) Kerrankan born in Kunnamkulam. As a young man he desired the priesthood. He began to learn the Scriptures and got as far as Chapter Ten of the Gospel of Matthew. But he did not master the Syriac alphabet. Nevertheless, Dionysius I ordained him a priest for the church of Arthat-Kunnamkulam. In 180, having learned of the illness of Philoxenus I the Anjoorian, he went to stay with him. Before his death, Philoxenus I invested him with the episcopal habit and called him Philox-

enus.<sup>489</sup> He succeeded him after his death. He was the second by this name and the fifth among the pretentious Anjoorian bishops.

Philoxenus II subscribed to the faith of the Protestant (Anglicans) in order to ingratiate himself to the Resident Col. Munro and achieve his mean goal of controlling the Syrian church of Malabar. Supported by the English Resident and the instigation of the governments of Travancore and Cochin, he usurped the title of "Metropolitan of Malabar." He illegally ordained three bishops successively as his assistants. They are Dionysius's II, III and IV. He endeavored to deport Metropolitan 'Abd al-Masih of Amid and persecute the clergymen and lay people who supported him. Thus, he played a significant role on the stage of the Syrian church of Malabar. Following is a brief biography of this perpetrator derived from the metrical ode composed by the two priests Abraham and Philip:

"He (Philoxenus II) cast away the Holy Scripture and joined the heretics. He altered the traditions of the Syrians casting from his hand the censer, and instead, held the sword as a symbol of power. He is a priest in name only. In fact, he is a demon. As a young man, he was a drunkard and profligate. At the end of life he became a scoundrel and ignorant who corrupted women and procreated bastards. Seven times a day he offended God. He came from the north as a wolf bouncing out of his den to ravage the lambs. While we Syrians did not ask him to be our administrator, he arbitrarily toured the Syrian churches. He usurped the diocese of Malabar and created sedition within the churches misguiding all of them. Being only a mere priest, he unlawfully invested three men with the Episcopal dignity. He was ignorant who only knew how to read the liturgy of Xestus. Because of his evil deeds and those of his followers, the churches became disturbed and the clergymen distressed. But when their iniquity reached high heaven, God wanted to reveal his purpose to the people of India and Syria. As he sent the Apostle St. Thomas to Malabar, India, when ravaging wolves were lurking, thus he sent in November, 1825 that good shepherd Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih. God did this by effort of our Father and Head Mar Ignatius the Patriarch who holds the sublime See of Antioch of St. Peter. The Patriarch is the Chief Leader and Shepherd, the Lord of all countries who holds the Key of the Kingdom of Heaven. He is endowed with a supreme power by our Lord Jesus Christ to bind and loose as he wills."

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<sup>489</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar written in 1841.

The composers of the ode went on to relate the conversation between Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih and this Anjoorian (Philoxenus) which we recorded above in Chapter Twelve.

On January 25, 1830, this wretched man perished and was buried in the chapel of the Seminary at Kottayam. With his death, the church was cleansed from abomination.

## **CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE PROTESTANTS PRESSURE THE SYRIANS TO ALTER THE FAITH**

In the aftermath of the deportation of Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih, the Protestants (Anglicans) established a firm foot in Malabar. In 1826, Rev. Fenn returned home and Rev. John Doran took his place. The Protestants (Anglicans) cooperated with the Dionysius Chepat in running the seminary. They moved it to the place where the Protestant College stands at present. For a few years things went on smoothly. In July 1833, a young English vicar named Joseph Peet arrived in Malabar and took charge of the administration of the seminary. As Dionysius was weak, Peet found it opportune to eradicate gradually the traditions of the Orthodox Church of Malabar.

At the outset, the missionaries promised not to interfere in the faith of the Syrians or their church traditions. But when they established firm roots in the country, they reneged on their promise and changed their attitude toward the Syrian church. They openly preached in the seminary and the churches against Orthodox beliefs. They specifically targeted the prayers for the deceased, the intercession of saints and the Mass (the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.). A vicar named Decker came from Madras to preach, without opposition, against the Orthodox faith in the Syrian churches. One of the Syrian customs was to abstain from eating meat during fasting days. Rev. Joseph Peet, however, much against this custom, offered meat to the seminarians during those holy days. His action impelled Dionysius to turn against the missionaries. As a result, quarrel ensued between him and the missionaries.

In January 1835, the Rev. Tucker, secretary of the mission in Madras, came to Travancore and Cochin to ascertain the truth about the alleged reform intended by the missionaries for the Syrian church. In his report, Tucker stated that, "Eighteen years of labor have been consumed upon this vineyard; during that time, the New Testament in Syriac has been put in the hands of the clergy; amongst the clergy and the laity it has been distributed in Malayalam; schools have been established in different places; the influence of the Missionaries has been exercised more or less at the College which was considered as the chief hope of the Mission and has educated,

besides many of the laity, about one hundred and fifty-three who are now officiating as Kattanars (priests) in the sixty churches of the Syrians.” Tucker went on to say, “And now let the state of things be reviewed at the end of these eighteen years. There is not known to be one single instance of the genuine conversion to God of any Syrian Kattannar or layman. I do not say there are none; I can only state that after making every enquiry, I could hear of none. Of the one hundred and fifty-three Kattanars educated more or less by the Missionaries, there is not one who who does not continue every Sunday performing services which are plainly contrary to the Word of God; nor could I find one who appears really willing to put them away. Neither has one corrupt practice been laid aside by the Church, nor is there any trace of an increased desire for real reformation, as far as I can learn, throughout the Syrian community, excepting at Kunnankulam, a place with which the Kottayam Missionaries have but little intercourse. To both the Metrans (bishops), and, I believe, to every Kattannar I have seen, I have put the following questions and have received in substance the same replies. ‘How do you account for it, that after the Missionaries have labored here for eighteen years, the Syrians still remain as they were? Answer: ‘There is a considerable improvement; the Scriptures have been distributed, and are more read than formerly.’ I said, ‘True, you have more light and knowledge, but not one Kattannar or layman has put aside one single error, or is ready to do so in consequence of the light he has received. Which of the one hundred and fifty-three Kattanars who have been taught the truth in the College is willing to obey the truth?’ The answer has invariably been “none.” The total number of Kattanars is about two hundred and forty, so that five-eighths of them have been under Missionary influence.”<sup>490</sup>

In this year, the repulsive acts of the missionaries reached the highest pitch and the conflict worsened. This happened when Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta, visited Travancore on November 6. His intention was to accomplish six changes and revisions in the rite and sacraments of the church to be presented to Dionysius. First, he discussed these changes with his vicar and the assistant of the British Resident. He allocated a thousand rupees for Dionysius if he agreed to the changes. Although Dionysius showed satisfaction of Wilson’s recommendations, he insisted on consulting first his own people.

The revisions of the faith and traditions proposed by Bishop Wilson and presented to Dionysius were as follows. First, no cleric should be or-

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<sup>490</sup> Cheriyan, *The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society*, 281–282.

dained a priest or a bishop unless provided by a certificate of competence and good conduct by English vicars, missionaries and the administration of the seminary. Second, church revenues should be handled by the English vicars. Also, its accounts and the accounts of the seminary should be supervised by the British Resident. Third, the Eucharist offered for the souls of the deceased should be abolished. Four, a school should be established in every church to educate the priests. Five, native priests should preach according to the Anglican tradition. Six, all anaphoras (liturgies) should be abrogated and only a short one be celebrated in Malayalam.<sup>491</sup>

Dionysius realized that this was the first step to implant the Anglican principles in the Syrian church; but did not oppose the proposals. Also, he did not decide whether they should be accepted or rejected. He only promised that he would reach a decision after consulting with his people. On Sunday, Wilson delivered a homily at the great church of Kottayam based on the verse of Revelation 3: 7 (What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open). He boasted that the entire churches have been placed under his authority.<sup>492</sup> He also declared in a speech delivered in the church of Kandanad that the prayer for the deceased should be abolished and that every term in the liturgy inconsistent with the Protestant (Anglican) faith should be dropped. Before departing Travancore, he had Mr. Bailey translate his speech into Malayalam and circulate it to 250 clergy and 100,000 laity of the Syrian church. He also asked the British resident to meet with Dionysius and arrange things according to his wishes. ( E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 192 ]

Bishop Wilson was acting like Alexis da Menezes in the sixteenth century although, like Menezes, he did not inflict persecution upon the church of Malabar.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: THE MAVELIKARA MEETING IN 1836

Dionysius IV did not fulfill his promises to Daniel Wilson. But when the Resident, Casamajor, came to Kottayam and asked Dionysius to fulfill them, Dionysius convened a meeting in Mavelikara on January 5, 1836. It was attended by the so-called Cyril III the Anjoorian, and the delegates of all the churches. It was also attended by Protestant (Anglican) missionaries to urge the members to accept Wilson's proposals.

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<sup>491</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal and E. M. Philip, 191–193.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*

The members who genuinely understood the true Orthodox faith in this assembly were few. The members who hailed from the south wanted to endorse Wilson's proposals for sheer gain and self interest. But the learned priest Abraham Konat and the Syrian of the north rejected them. After deliberating the issue, the entire members unanimously agreed not to make changes without the permission of the Patriarch of Antioch. Also, by the effort and wisdom of the priest Philip Edavazhikal, they wrote down a declaration of their complete detachment from the Anglicans. They signed the declaration together with Dionysius and Cyril and handed it over to Dionysius. Then, they dispersed. Following is their declaration:

"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit one true and everlasting God. Concerning the declaration written down on January 5, 1836, at the Church of Maryam, Mother of God in Mavelikara, by the Metropolitan Dionysius and his heir, Metropolitan Cyril, and by the delegates the priest and laity of the Syrian churches of Malabar, who are under the jurisdiction of our Lord the Patriarch Mar Ignatius the Supreme Head who occupies the See of Antioch of St. Peter. Based on what Dionysius said to Bishop Daniel Wilson of Calcutta, who arrived in Kottayam last November that he will consult with the congregations regarding changing some parts of the Mass (Holy Eucharist) and the rite of our Syrian Church. We hereby declare that, we, the Syrians, are under the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch, and that our rite is established by the fathers who were delegated by the Patriarch. Therefore, we will never consent and we have no authority and power to make any changes thereof. Furthermore, there should be no custom of the clergy of a certain denomination preached in the churches of another one without the permission of the patriarch.<sup>493</sup> We also do not permit Anglican vicars to preach in our churches. Our churches were established by the metropolitans delegated by the patriarch and by the faithful of the dioceses. They were supported by their funds and adorned by the vessels used in them. Because the funds of the churches the world over are entrusted to their metropolitans, we therefore, do not agree that the funds of our churches be placed in the hands of Anglican vicars, but in our own hands."

Authors of the declaration continued that, "Metropolitan Dionysius, who passed away in 1808, had paid Resident Macaulay three thousand *Poppirakan* (a Malabarian currency) with annual interest.<sup>494</sup> For a few years, the

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<sup>493</sup> E. M. Philip. 192–193. TRANS.

<sup>494</sup> See above Book IV, Chapter VII. TRANS.



government forbade the interest to be cashed from the company. Then, Dionysius<sup>495</sup> cashed it by order of Col. Munro and built the Seminary at Kottayam.<sup>496</sup> He furnished it with the items provided by the fathers who came from Antioch and by the metropolitans from the Pakalomattam family. This interest cashed by Dionysius and the funds donated by the king (raja) of Travancore for the education of the Syrian children, were spent for the seminarians. In the meantime, the Anglican vicars came to our Seminary and taught our children English and other languages. They cared for them as loving fathers. They printed holy books and helped us revive our faith and the rituals of our Syrian Church. Metropolitan<sup>497</sup> kept receiving annually the interest from the company and spending it on the seminary. He also, ordained clergy according to his own authority and in response to the requirement of the dioceses. While these things were running in the usual course, the Anglican vicars began to interfere arbitrarily in the affairs of the seminary and act without the consent of the metropolitan. Acting on their own, they expelled the deacons who taught at the seminary. They attempted to change our rite and tradition thus planting malice and hatred which caused us grief and pain. We hope to overcome this distress by the intercession of the Mother of God the blessed St. Mary and all of the saints. Amen. We do not approve of or accept the teachings or faith and rites of others, but only those of our Orthodox Syrians. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bear witness to all of these matters.”

This is then, the declaration signed by the president and members of the Meeting of Mavelikara which resulted in the severance of relations between the Church of Malabar and the Anglicans. Afterwards, the priest Philip had the opportunity to correspond with the Patriarch. He appealed to him to send metropolitans to Malabar. But Dionysius began to hate him because Philip declared that this declaration serves as a hedge between us and the Anglicans and that Dionysius should communicate momentarily with the Patriarch in order to delegate church fathers to Malabar.<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> This is Dionysius II who died in 1816. See above Book IV, Chapters VIII and IX. TRANS.

<sup>496</sup> See Book IV, Chapters VIII and IX. TRANS.

<sup>497</sup> Dionysius II. TRANS.

<sup>498</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE SEVERANCE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SYRIANS AND THE PROTESTANTS

Although the decision of the Mavelikara Meeting disappointed the Anglicans, they nevertheless tried to overlook it. They proceeded to implement exactly Wilson's proposals without the knowledge of Dionysius or the priests. They continued preaching freely in the Syrian churches in addition to managing the seminary. They openly inculcated the students with teachings contrary to the orthodox dogma. They also used Protestant (Anglican) rites in the chapel of the seminary and in other churches. Moreover, they introduced their own formula of the *Filioque*<sup>499</sup> into the Creed and forced the students to recite it. They expelled the deacons who did not obey.<sup>500</sup> They appointed the priest Abraham Pallakonan of Moramannu to teach those students who had stopped using the Syriac rite and fasting in compliance with the wishes of the Anglican vicars.<sup>501</sup> Furthermore, they mocked the prayers for the deceased and the celebration of the Mass. As a result of this repulsive treatment, Dionysius forbade the students from continuing their study at the seminary and condemned those who disobeyed.<sup>502</sup>

Realizing that they could not subjugate the Syrian church at once, the Anglican vicars resorted to those Syrians in their service to do so. Consequently, four priests and some laity embraced their faith. Urged by the priest Philip, Dionysius issued from the church of Podepelli a proclamation to the entire churches asking them to cut off relations with the Anglican missionaries.<sup>503</sup>

In 1836, the missionaries resorted to the revision of the liturgy in the light of Wilson's proposals. They employed for this project four priests disobedient to Dionysius. Upon completing the task, the missionaries asked them to celebrate the revised version of the liturgy. Three of them refused to do so. Since then, the celebration of Eucharist according to the revised

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<sup>499</sup> The procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. TRANS.

<sup>500</sup> E. M. Philip, 193.

<sup>501</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>502</sup> E. M. Philip, *Ibid.*

<sup>503</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

liturgy was called a “Half Mass.” It is still known by this name.<sup>504</sup> The Syriac tract written in 1841 in Kandanad, mentions that two priest, Abraham Pallkonun, a celibate, and Kito who was married, have altered the rite of the Mass and celebrated it according to the Anglicans’ wishes. They omitted from the *Sbhimo* (Service book for the whole week) the supplications to the Virgin (Mary) and the saints. They also omitted prayers for the deceased.<sup>505</sup>

The Rev. Joseph Peet, together with the priest Mark Irritikel and Irritikel’s nephew the deacon Alexander, the priest Abraham Konat and others taught at the seminary.<sup>506</sup> In this year, while Dionysius was celebrating Palm Sunday in his church about half a mile distance from the seminary, Joseph Peet entered the seminary and smashed the lock of the treasury which was still jointly controlled by the Syrians and the Anglicans. He pillaged the documents therein and carried them away to his residence.<sup>507</sup> He and his supporters expelled the priest Abraham Konat from the seminary. The Anglicans tightened their grip against Dionysius forcing him to leave the seminary. He left and made his residence in some churches. Afterwards, they addressed a letter to the Diwan (Prime Minister) of Travancore claiming that the articles and furniture of the seminary are their property. The Diwan sent an official to sell the furnishings of the seminary and had him deliver a letter to Dionysius. The official came to Kottayam in 1838 and delivered the letter to Dionysius. Then, he went to the missionaries who had in their possession the documents of money and the vessels which they had looted as said earlier. The official sold everything they had and then went to the seminary. He sold everything in it including the pottery vessels whose price was estimated at seventy-five thousand rupees. The money was deposited in the Company’s treasury in Kollam.<sup>508</sup>

At that time, there was no civil or penal court in Travancore. Who would then judge for Dionysius if he filed a suit? In fact, the British Resident was the only authority whom fate destined to be in Travancore to listen to his complains. But what could poor Dionysius do while the Resident was the advocate of the missionaries? So, he had no choice but to take his case to him. And when Dionysius filed the suit, the Resident immediately

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<sup>504</sup> E. M. Philip, 194.

<sup>505</sup> This is according to MS in the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>506</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>507</sup> E. M. Philip, 194.

<sup>508</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

issued a verdict to divide the properties of the Syrian church between him and the missionaries giving the lion's share the latter. Dionysius appealed the case to the governor of Madras who appointed an arbitration committee to settle the case. The governor gave Dionysius the choice to have the case settled by the court or by a committee acceptable to both the Syrians and the missionaries. Dionysius opted for an arbitration committee. As a result, a committee was formed by three English arbiters: Baron de Elpedil who was chosen by the missionaries, John Sipio Frend who was chosen by Dionysius and Henry Hoarsely who was chosen by the court. A Roman Catholic attorney was appointed to defend the Syrians. The two litigants, the Syrians and the missionaries, defended their case before the arbiters. On April 4, 1840, the arbiters issued a decision at Cochin slightly different from the decision of the Resident. They resolved that all the properties of the Syrian church prior to the arrival of the Anglican missionaries are theirs and should be administered by a Syrian metropolitan in conjunction with a priest and a wealthy Syrian chosen by the Syrian community. These three stewards would be trusted with the receipt of the interest of the already known funds. The properties the Syrian had after the arrival of the missionaries belong to the latter because the Syrian metropolitan refused to cooperate with them. Thus, the seminary and its properties and the amount of money deposited in the government bank should be under the disposal of the Syrian church. As to the isle of Munro and the campus of the college and its buildings, they were offered to the missionaries. As a result, the Syrian church suffered egregious losses.<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>509</sup> For this verdict see Joseph Ittoop Ritter, 232–245, *A tract on the church of Malabar* by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal and E. M. Philip, 194.



## **PART FIVE: THE SCHISM OF ATHANASIUS MATTA**

### **CHAPTER ONE: THE APPEAL OF THE CHURCH OF MALABAR TO THE SEE OF ANTIOCH**

We have seen earlier that following the deportation of Metropolitan Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih, the condition of the church of Malabar became chaotic because of the interference of the Anglican propagandists. But when the propagandists lost their control over the church, Dionysius became subject of their persecution. He could not even administer his diocese with freedom for fearing them. Once they instigated the stewards of the church of Parum, whom he suspended, against him. With the help of the Resident they complained against him to the government authorities. The authorities had him chained and taken to court like a criminal. He was tried contrary to the common laws. But he was saved from this ordeal.<sup>510</sup>

Teaching at the seminary was suspended since 1838 for lack of funds. But the Anglican teaching had gradually established roots in the hearts of many including the priest-educator Abraham Palakonnun. He was one of the four priests the Anglican missionaries employed to revise the Syriac liturgy as previously said. He introduced the venomous (Anglican) teachings first to his church at Moramannu where he celebrated the revised liturgy. He also, abolished the sacramental confession, the prayer for the deceased, the intercession of the Virgin and saints and the celebration of the Eucharist even if one person attended to receive the communion. Furthermore, Abraham administered the elements of the Bread and Wine separate from each other according to Anglican custom. These repugnant usages spread gradually until many deacons who studied under him became his partisans. When Dionysius learned of this, he became outraged and excommunicated Abraham and the parishioners of Moramannu. He issued a proclamation to

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<sup>510</sup> E. M. Philip, 195.

the Syrian churches that he would never ordain the deacons who studied under Abraham as priests.

At this time, some zealous Syrian priests were in communication with the Apostolic See. They intended to explain the deplorable state of the church. They appealed to the Patriarch to send them bishops to get them out of their predicament. Of these, the most ardent was the priest Philip who was rekindled with activity and zeal.<sup>511</sup> Urged by him, Dionysius also addressed a letter to the Patriarch about the same. He informed the patriarch that he was willing to abdicate his episcopal position in order to escape the clutches of the Anglican missionaries. Moreover, he provided the patriarch with a list of names of the priests and deacons whom he excommunicated for supporting the missionaries.<sup>512</sup> Likewise, the Syrian churches addressed similar letters to the Patriarch Elias II, some of which he received on August 13, 1840 carried by a messenger named Marugi. Most of them stated that, "The Syrian flock was scattered without a shepherd or administrator to guide it according to apostolic canons. Ravenous wolves have penetrated it and planted tares in the hearts of many and scattered it." The letters also stated that, "Since 1825, the Syrian churches addressed eleven letters to the patriarch asking him to send a metropolitan, but nothing happened. Thus, the church became like a widow and has been denied spiritual instruction." Finally, the authors of the letters state that if the patriarch delayed in delegating a metropolitan, he alone would bear the responsibility.<sup>513</sup>

The Patriarch, greatly saddened, tried to respond to the request of the church of Malabar. On September 1, 1840, he addressed four letters to the priests Philip Edavazhikal, to the priest and teacher Abraham Konat and to the church of Malabar in general informing them of receiving their letters carried by Marugi. He expressed sorrow for their present deplorable condition, while in the past, were like choice wheat in the field of the Lord. He said that Providence and pastoral affection have urged him to send them bishops to administer the affairs of their churches and dioceses. He further stated that he would convene a holy synod to discuss the matter. He assured them that if it were possible, he would personally journey to Malabar accompanied by bishops and would bring with him Holy Chrism and

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<sup>511</sup> See the letter of the priest Philip composed in the Sarugite (twelve-meter) to Metropolitan Timothy Abraham of Edessa.

<sup>512</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>513</sup> E. M. Philip, 197–210.

books. He would ordain for them bishops, priests and deacons. He would also set the church in order according to the apostolic canons. The patriarch went on saying that he learned at present that a metropolitan had ordained another metropolitan and a priest had ordained another priest contrary to the Holy Gospel. In fact, Christ himself first ordained the Apostles as deacons, then priests, then bishops and patriarchs. Finally, he advised them to remain firm in the true faith.

The patriarch's letters arrived on April 9, 1841, eight months after they were written. They were opened at the church of Thompon much to the Syrians' joy. A great number of clergy and laity gathered at the church and read the Patriarchal Proclamation with the sound of drums and flutes. They addressed a lengthy letter, forty and a half pages long, to the bishops who were to be delegated by the patriarch. It contained a short history of the church of Malabar since the time of St. Thomas until the date of its writing in 1841. Among those present were the priests Abraham Konat and Philip Edavazhikal. They addressed a letter to the fathers appealing to them to make its contents known to the patriarch. They said, "When the delegated fathers have arrived at the house of the maphryono in Cochin, they should immediately proceed to the church of Kandanaḍ and not to the seminary or to the churches in the south lest the same thing happen to them which had been perpetrated in the past by the enemies. They should also remain in the church of Kandanaḍ until they were able to distinguish between friends and foes. Finally, they should not act in haste."<sup>514</sup>

The Patriarch held a synod to discuss the predicament of the church of Malabar. Members of the synod decided to send letters to the entire Syrian churches of Malabar asking them to select intelligent and pious monks, priests and deacons to be delegated by the Apostolic See. They will be taught church sciences and rituals and what was necessary for the administration of the church. They will be ordained consecutively and sent to Malabar.<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> The letter is at the Patriarchal Library in Homs. In 1841 the American Episcopalian Rev. Horatio Southgate visited Patriarch Elias II at the Za'faran Monastery. The patriarch told him that "last autumn a messenger had arrived from India with letters from the Malabar Christians requesting that a Metropolitan might be sent to them to preserve their Episcopal succession." See Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Visit to the Syrian [Jacobite] Church of Mesopotamia* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1844), 198. TRANS.

<sup>515</sup> See a tract on the Church of Malabar written in Arabic by the deacon Stephen of Azekh.



## CHAPTER TWO: THE ORDINATION OF ATHANASIUS MATTA

Athanasius Matta was born in the village of Moramannu on April 10, 1810. He came from the family of Palakonnun. His father was Mattachen (Matthew) and mother, Annam (Hanna). He was a nephew of the excommunicated priest Abraham. He was baptized by his uncle in the church of Maramannu who called him Matta (Matthew).<sup>516</sup> When he grew up, his uncle took charge of his education. Matta studied first the principles of the Malayalam and the Tamil languages. He entered the seminary to study religious sciences and church rites with the intention of becoming a priest. This was prior to the conflict that took place between Dionysius IV and the Anglican missionaries. His uncle was then teaching the Syriac language and church rituals jointly with the priest Abraham Konat and others at the seminary. Meantime, the Anglican vicars Bailey, Fenn and Baker taught English, Greek and Hebrew at the seminary while Conin Ashan of Calicut taught Sanskrit. Matta excelled in his studies. Of his class mates were George Mathan Kirodil from Puthencave and Mattan, nephew of Dionysius IV. Dionysius ordained them lesser monks. When conflict provoked between him and the Anglican missionaries, Matta was among those who opposed Dionysius and supported the missionaries. This caused Dionysius to excommunicate him together with his mates George Mattan and his uncle the priest Abraham. Matta and George left for Madras helped by the missionaries. They entered the Grammar School of Bishop Corrie and studied the curriculum specified for the Anglican vicars. Shortly afterwards, Matta fell into the snares of the devil and was expelled from the school despite that he had embraced the Anglican faith. He returned home in Maramannu. His friend, George, returned to Travancore as the first native Anglican vicar in Malabar.<sup>517</sup>

At this time, Matta's uncle, the excommunicated teacher priest Abraham Palakonnun, suffered great anxiety. When he learned that Patriarch (Elias II) had asked the Syrians of Malabar to choose monks and deacons for the episcopate office, he envisaged a new plan to have one of his followers become a metropolitan. His intention was to have such metropolitan assist him in achieving his destructive plans. Abraham chose his nephew Matta for this task. In 1841, he sent him secretly to the Apostolic See provided with a fabricated document dated March 30, 1840. It was signed by

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<sup>516</sup> See his biography by G. Wargis who mentioned that Matta was born in 1818. More correctly, however, is what we have just said.

<sup>517</sup> E. M. Philip, 197.

the forged names of ten priests and nine Psalters of Malabar.<sup>518</sup> In this document, these alleged men requested Patriarch Elias II to ordain Matta a metropolitan for Malabar to succeed the only Syrian metropolitan in India who had passed away. Because Matta's name appeared only as a deacon in the list of the clergy which Dionysius IV had sent to the Apostolic See, Abraham changed his name into the priest Matta lest the patriarch suspect his true rank.<sup>519</sup>

Matta left Malabar for Madras. He collected five hundred rupees from the Anglicans and their adherents. He then left for Bombay and stayed at the Anglican Church in that city. In Bombay, the Anglican vicar collected for him two hundred rupees.<sup>520</sup> He sailed for Iraq<sup>521</sup> and then proceeded to Mosul. He traveled to Mardin and presented himself to the Patriarch Elias II. He handed him the forged document and told him that he had obtained the dignity of priesthood by the laying on of hands of the deceased metropolitan. The patriarch first ordained him a deacon and then a priest. At the end of January, 1842, he invested him with the monastic habit. A week later, on February 2 of the Eastern calendar which is the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, he ordained him a Metropolitan for Malabar with the name of Athanasius. Assisting the patriarch in the ceremony of ordination was Cyril, metropolitan of the Patriarchal Office and Bishop Cyril Malke.

Athanasius Matta spent six months at the patriarchal residence and then returned to Malabar. The patriarch presented him with a staff, a vestment for the celebration of the Eucharist, a cross and a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew and a quantity of Holy Chrism. He provided him with a *ysstacon*<sup>522</sup> dated February 1, 1842 of the Eastern calendar, that is one day before he ordained him a metropolitan. In the *ysstacon*, the patriarch said that he had first ordained Matta a deacon, then a priest, then a monk and finally a metropolitan. He authorized him to administer the seminary in Kottayam and receive its revenues to be spent for the benefit of the Syrian church of Malabar. He also authorized him to manage the special rights of

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<sup>518</sup> This document is at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>519</sup> See the Syriac reply of the priest Philip Edavazhikal to Henry Baker dated about 1872 and E. M. Philip, 198–199.

<sup>520</sup> See his biography by G. Wargis, 12–13.

<sup>521</sup> Basra. TRANS.

<sup>522</sup> Letter of commendation. TRANS.

the church and the metropolitans. The patriarch further mentioned that he sent with Matta Holy Chrism for the church of Malabar.<sup>523</sup>

### CHAPTER THREE: ATHANASIOUS MATTA IN MOSUL AND BOMBAY

Upon his arrival in Mosul, Athanasius Matta received order from the patriarch to remain in the city until further notice. The patriarch also wrote the same to the Mosul diocese. Matta said that the reason for the patriarch's order is that the metropolitan of Mosul was absent in Constantinople, and so he remained more than a year in the city.<sup>524</sup> But some zealous parishioners became displeased with his teachings on the ground they were interspersed with Protestantism. They complained to the patriarch who summoned him for questioning, but he refused to do so. Instead, he replied with a letter marked by arrogance and rebellion.<sup>525</sup> Immediately, he left for Malabar taking with him an attendant from Mosul named Raffo (Rafael). At the end of February, 1843, he reached Bombay and addressed a letter in English on March 11 to his friend the Anglican vicar George. He said, "I have sent from Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) letters to different persons but they were likely lost on the way. I remained in Mesopotamia twenty months six, of which with the patriarch and the rest in the diocese of Mosul. The messengers of the man of sin<sup>526</sup> were using everything in their power to trap our people into the snares of the pope. They have established schools to attract our children to their institutions. A French wealthy man named Boré (at present the French Consul at Jerusalem), came to Mosul on his own to accomplish the intention of the pope. So far, fifteen families fell into the trap. You should know that our people are wronged by the Ottoman governors, on the one hand, and on the other, are oppressed by the papists. The papists are protected by the French government but our people are left to the mercy of the cruel rulers. The abovementioned French person promises protection to those who embrace Popism and exemption from different taxes. He also offers them many other attractive promises. These matters created tremendous turmoil within our people. In fact, I personally was persecuted from within and without. If it were not for the keeper of Israel who protected me, the papists would have assassinated me. They used every stratagem to expel me from Mosul. They instigated our people against me

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<sup>523</sup> See Matta's biography in Malayalam, 58–66.

<sup>524</sup> See his letter written in English which shall be stated later.

<sup>525</sup> See his biography, 23–25.

<sup>526</sup> Satan. TRANS.

claiming that I teach Protestantism. God, however, foiled their wicked machinations for the good of our people. I went from house to house warning the people according to the grace given me. Every Sunday I preached three times. Our beloved patriarch is almost ninety years old. A few days afterwards, I will reach Malabar and will address several official letters to the patriarch and to the churches in Mesopotamia.<sup>527</sup>

Athanasius Matta remained in Bombay and other places for more than a year. He received from the Anglican missionaries the necessary plans to cast his net into the Syrian church in order to catch its members in the future. On May 3, 1844, he arrived in Cochin and stayed in the church of Mattancheri and then left for Travancore. His excommunicated uncle was then forty-seven years old.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: THE IMPACT OF THE ORDINATION OF MATTA ON THE MALABAR CHURCH

The ordination of Athanasius Matta left a deleterious impact on the Malabar church. Shortly after his arrival in that country, a meeting was held at the Church of Kandanad to hear the reading of his *systaticon*. When it was read, the disgraceful means he used to obtain that exalted office of which he was unworthy was exposed. He had embraced the Protestant (Anglican) doctrine in addition to his repugnant conduct. Moreover, he had forged a document stating that he was a priest, as has been said earlier. The patriarch himself mentioned this in his *systaticon*. After deliberation, the attending members, except for few, renounced his claims. They issued a joint document with Dionysius addressed to the patriarch informing him of Athanasius's fabrications. They stated that he had embraced the Protestant faith. They offered a synopsis of his life since childhood. On May 19, 1844, the priests Abraham Konat and Philip addressed a letter to the patriarch and to Metropolitan 'Abd al-Masih that, "Matta was only a lower rank deacon in Malabar. He along with other deacons, his uncle the priest Abraham and others, embraced the Protestant doctrine. They rejected the honoring of the Mother of God, the saints, the commemoration of the deceased and the worship of the cross and its symbol. They divested the Mass from the sacramental statements like "The remembrance of our Lord and God." They deleted the terms of "One Person," the saints and the Mother of God from

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<sup>527</sup> See his biography, 32–35.

the prayer books.<sup>528</sup> Instead, they devised their own rites. But when they realized that delegates of the Apostolic See were soon coming to Malabar, and that their innovative teaching would soon disappear like a smoke, they dispatched Matta as a spy from Madras to Mardin.” The letter of these two priests was delivered with God’s grace by ‘Azar of Aleppo.

The Syrian notable ‘Azar wrote to the priests that their letters reached him on August 2, 1844. Three days later, he delivered them to the patriarch who was then absent in Constantinople for two months defending the rights of the church. Upon receiving the letter, the patriarch was surprised about Matta’s actions and how he had altered the faith this way. He said that when Matta arrived at the Za’faran Monastery carrying letters from the clergy and laity recommending his ordination as metropolitan, the patriarch asked him at the ordination, “If the Syrians of Malabar wrote to me against you, I will excommunicate you and appoint another metropolitan instead of you.”

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE APPOINTMENT OF METROPOLITAN CYRIL JOAKIM AN ARCHBISHOP OF MALABAR

Joakim was son of Malke, son of Israel of the village of Hbob in Tur ‘Abdin. He was born in Hbob in February, 1810. In 1827, he studied the Syriac language and church rituals. In 1837, he entered the Za’faran Monastery to study more Syriac and calligraphy under Severus ‘Abd al-Nur, metropolitan of Mar Malke’s Monastery. Sometimes, he taught the same subjects to students. On August 6, 1839, Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Nur ordained him a deacon at the church of Mar Demit in the village of Arbo. On August 14, he invested him with the monastic habit and on August 15 ordained him a priest. Six months later, he joined the office of Patriarch Elias II who made him his secretary from 1840 to 1845. He accompanied the patriarch on his journey to Constantinople. On February 18, 1845, the patriarch ordained him a metropolitan for the Patriarchal Office and called him Cyril at his ordination.<sup>529</sup> When the patriarch received letters from Malabar following the treachery of Athanasius Matta, he became extremely saddened. After serious deliberation, he appointed Cyril Joakim a metropolitan for Malabar. He commissioned him to investigate Matta’s case and to excommunicate him if he found that the letters from Malabar contained the truth about

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<sup>528</sup> The reference here is to the *Shhimo* or the Prayer Book for the Whole Week. TRANS.

<sup>529</sup> See his Syriac biography at the Patriarchal Library.

him. Cyril journeyed to Beirut and then to Jerusalem and Egypt accompanied by his brother Maqdisi Gabriel.<sup>530</sup>

On April 9, 1845, while in Egypt, Cyril addressed a letter to the priest Philip Edavazhikal asking him to send him expenses (for his voyage). He said that he had borrowed an amount of money in Egypt with enormous interest pawning all his belongings. He further said that the patriarch had provided him with a *systaticon* and appointed him an Archbishop of Malabar. On the back of this letter, the priest Philip wrote down that he sold the jewelry of his sons and daughters in order to send Cyril seven hundred rupees. On May 15, 1845, Patriarch Elias II provided Cyril with a *systaticon* in the handwriting of the priest Yuhanna of Edessa and stamped with the seal of Timothy Abraham, metropolitan of Edessa.

At the beginning of June, 1846, Cyril arrived in Bombay and stayed at the Armenian Church. The Syrians of Malabar sent him 518 rupees. On June 24, Dionysius IV addressed a letter to him from the seminary at Kottayam expressing his joy for his arrival. He also said that he was disturbed by the actions of Matta and others like him. Cyril mentioned this letter in his reply to the priest Philip Edavazhikal sent from Bombay on July 13 of this year. On July 3, Cyril addressed letters to Dionysius and the priests Abraham Konat, Philip Edavazhikal and Zechariah of the Podepelli church thanking them for the expenses they provided him with. He informed them that he was waiting for a ship to sail from Bombay. He advised them to love one another.

On Friday August 2, eleven priests, three deacons and twenty-five laymen addressed a letter to Cyril from the church of Chattukulam informing him that, "They live in the northern region which has fifty-two churches and a small chapel; other churches are located in the southern region. They said that Cochin lies sixteen miles to the south of where they live which is the same distance between them and the great seminary. They further mentioned that they have no congregation in southern Cochin except for one church in that city. Apart from the great seminary, however, they said that they have many churches with metropolitans and priests. They further said that when Metropolitan Athanasius and a monk in his company arrived in Cochin in 1825, they accompanied them with great joy to the great seminary. But the metropolitan and the monk provoked a conflict and were de-

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<sup>530</sup> See his holiness Patriarch Aphram Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*. This history is translated into English by Matti Moosa and presently under publication by Gorgias Press. TRANS.

ported to Antioch by instigation of the Anglican missionaries. They continued saying that in the kingdom of the king (raja) of Cochin, there are ten churches and more than twenty thousand Syrian souls. Furthermore, they have deliberated the question of expenses and decided to send a hundred rupees for his (Cyril) passage from Bombay to Tottof. They will deliver the amount to the ship of Latif the Turk. Upon his arrival in Tottof, they will come and take him to the church of Chattokulam about two miles away. As soon as the metropolitans, priests, deacons, teachers and lay people of Malabar learn of his arrival at this church, they will rush to meet him. They hope that no conflict will arise same as that which happened when Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih and the monk arrived in Malabar, but peace will prevail."<sup>531</sup>

On August 11, Cyril addressed a general letter from Bombay to Dionysius IV, and to Athanasius Matta and the clergy, deacons and notables and all the Syrians of Malabar in India, informing them of the reasons for his delay in Bombay. He says that he received the letters of Dionysius IV and the priests Abraham Konat and Philip, and that his Holiness the Patriarch knows of Dionysius's predicament. He goes on to say that he himself has addressed several letters to the patriarch praising Dionysius and those in his service. Meantime, Cyril addressed a letter to the priests Abraham Konat, Philip and Zechariah and the Syrian notables Mamen and Ittaperry, informing them that at 9 a. m of August 11, he would board a ship of a man named Hajji Isma'il, guaranteed by the Armenians Mark and Mackerdich, bound for Cochin. He asks them to prepare for him the residence of Mar Basilius Shukr Allah in Cochin.

On August 20, Cyril addressed a letter at the fort of Kannur to the priests Abraham Konat, Philip, Zechariah and the notables Mamen, Ittaperry, Zechariah and Peter, informing them that he had reached the Kannur fortress near Talcherry. He asks them to hasten to Cochin to prepare for him the residence of Mar Basilius. He says that their coming to Cochin is most necessary because he does not know the Indian language.

On August 26, Cyril arrived in Cochin. Thousands of joyful Syrians of Malabar came out to meet him and receive his blessing. Among them was Dionysius IV.

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<sup>531</sup> A copy of this letter is in my possession.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF METROPOLITAN MATTA

Cyril Joakim arrived in Malabar at the end of August, 1846. He was authorized by Patriarch Elias II to examine the charges launched against Athanasius Matta to the Apostolic See. Cyril discussed the matter with the Syrian clergy and notables. A few of them accused him of prevarication as if he was trying to ingratiate himself to Matta. This caused estrangement between Cyril and some clergymen. It urged the priest Philip Edavazhikal to exchange letters with him concerning this matter. Meantime, Philip desired to obtain a passport in order to journey to the Apostolic See, but was told that Cyril Joakim was attempting to stop him. Priest Philip addressed a letter to the priest Abraham Konat expressing sorrow for Cyril's ill intention. Abraham showed the letter to Cyril. On November 15, Cyril addressed a letter to priest Philip telling him that what he had learned about him concerning this case being false. He was surprised how Philip could believe such a thing. He asked him to meet with Dionysius and discuss the matter with him cordially. He should then come to see him soon with his son Philip and the priest Gurgis whom he had left alone. Cyril further said that he had already communicated with Dionysius asking him to come and see him with the priest Mark to discuss some issues.

Cyril Joakim deliberated the case of Matta with the clergymen and notables faithful to the Apostolic See. When he became convinced of the charges launched against him to the Apostolic See, chiefly that he had embraced the Protestant (Anglican) faith, he excommunicated him according to the Patriarchal Proclamation and informed the patriarch accordingly. The patriarch addressed several letters to some clergymen and notables supporting Cyril's decision. One letter, dated March 2, 1847, was addressed to the priest Zechariah of the Puthupally church. Two other letters were dated March 3, 1847, one was addressed to the notables Ayyub (Job) Panakal, another Ayyub and Gurgis Paramil and Jacob of Kunnamkulam. The other letter was addressed to the notable Mamen of Rani. The patriarch informed them how seven years ago a liar and deceiver named Matta came to see him. He had with him a forged letter in the name of the Syrians of Malabar asking to be ordained a metropolitan for Malabar. He says that he was deceived by Matta like the serpent in Paradise.<sup>532</sup> After ordaining him a metropolitan and providing him with a *ystaticon* (letter of commendation) and some other letters, Matta returned to India and was acknowledged in his position by the

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<sup>532</sup> The serpent which deceived Eve and Adam. TRANS.



kings (rajas) and people. But he rebelled and planted seeds of sedition within his own community. Therefore, the patriarch says, he delegated Cyril Joakim to replace him. He authorized him to get hold of the churches and save them from the accursed and condemned Matta. He should expel this evil man who forsook his faith and followed that of the Anglicans. The patriarch explains that Matta's intention was to lay hands on the entire churches of Malabar and deliver them to the English (Anglicans). Moreover, he intended to deceive the whole people with his insolence. He further informs them that he has written the same to the kings (rajas) of Malabar and to the Syrian people, the clergy and their administrators to receive Cyril and assist him in ousting Matta. They should entrust Cyril with their external and domestic affairs and extend to him help in every conceivable manner. They should support him to protect the faith.

When the Patriarchal Proclamations containing the excommunication of Athanasius Matta were circulated, Matta got into a bad fix. He found no alternative but to resort to the Anglican propagandists to achieve his aim. Although the Anglicans had once expelled him from their school and churches saying that he was not worthy of the office of priesthood, now they hastened to his aid hoping he would become the most convenient tool to implement the proposals of Daniel Wilson in the Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar. Moreover, Matta received assistance from the British Resident, Lieutenant General William Cullen. Since the desire of Dionysius and the majority of the Syrian people was to have Cyril Joakim take charge of the administration of the church instead of Matta, Dionysius entrusted Cyril with this task. Thus, conflict ensued between Cyril and Matta.<sup>533</sup>

The British Resident recommended to the government of Travancore to appoint a board to adjudge the conflict between the two men. The board included four members, two of whom, Golf, the second judge, and Wright, Secretary of Hasur, were British; the other two, Annandapella and Vinkitar Manna, were natives of Malabar. The board served summons to both Cyril and Matta to appear before it on March 4, 1848 at Kollam with two priests and four laymen from each church. On June 9, the board issued a verdict, influenced by the Resident and the Anglican missionaries. It stated that the documents presented by the excommunicated Athanasius Matta confirm the validity of his office as a metropolitan which he received from the Patriarch of Antioch. It called on the Church of Malabar to subject itself to him.

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<sup>533</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 200

It also accused Cyril of falsifying the proclamation of the Patriarch which contained Matta's excommunication.<sup>534</sup>

For some time, Cyril was not welcomed in Travancore and could not visit the Syrian churches. He was forced to leave Kottayam on the night of January 8, 1849. He resided in Cochin and was visited by Syrians from every direction.<sup>535</sup> He addressed a letter to the priest Philip asking him to proceed to Trivandrum, capital of Cochin, in order to obtain a royal decree allowing him to visit the churches with full freedom.

### **CHAPTER SEVEN: THE COMING OF ATHANASIOUS STEPHEN TO MALABAR AND HIS DEFENSE AT THE COURT OF MADRAS**

Stephen was son of Shaddi, son of Sennacherib, son of 'Abd Allah from the Shaddi family originally from Basibrina, Tur 'Abdin. He was born in the town of the Jazira around 1805. He was ordained a priest in 1831 and then became a widower. On Sunday, January 15, 1840, Patriarch Elias II ordained him a bishop for Syria, that is Damascus, Homs, the Monastery of Mar Musa and their dependencies. Attending his ordination were Metropolitans Cyril Matta Rassam and Eustathius 'Abd al-Nur Kashish Oghli. He was called Iyawannis at his ordination. At the beginning of 1844, he resigned his position and went to Mardin.<sup>536</sup> When Patriarch Jacob II,<sup>537</sup> heard the sad news of the church of Malabar, he decided to delegate Stephen to that country to cooperate with Cyril Joakim. He changed his ordination name to Athanasius.

On March 28, 1848, Athanasius Stephen journeyed to Malabar accompanied by his brother, Maqdisi Hanna and the monk Shim'un (Simon) of Isphe. He passed through Mosul, Baghdad and Basra which he left on September 23.<sup>538</sup> In Mosul, Baghdad, Basra and Bushir, he met with British consuls in these cities who stamped their seals on the letters which the Patriarch had him carry to the government of Malabar. They contained the excommunication of Athanasius Matta and support of Cyril and Stephen.<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> See the minutes of this trial and the verdict of the committee in Joseph Ittoop Ritter, 251 and E. M. Philip, 201.

<sup>535</sup> See His Holiness Patriarch Aphram Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Diocese*.

<sup>536</sup> Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*.

<sup>537</sup> The successor of Elias II. TRANS.

<sup>538</sup> Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*.

<sup>539</sup> See the letter of Cyril Joakim dated March 8, 1851 addressed to the priest Philip.

In April, 1849, Stephen arrived in Cochin and delivered the patriarch's letters to the British Resident, William Cullen. In turn, the Resident delivered them to the government and informed Stephen of this in a letter No. 421, 1849.

The Syrians suggested to Stephen to travel to Madras to defend the suppressed rights of the See of Antioch which had been neglected by Cyril. Stephen left for Madras accompanied by a native priest of Malabar named Joseph. On May 21, he addressed a joint letter to the priests Abraham Konat, Philip Edavazhikal and Zechariah of Puthupally and the notables Chalil Cora and Peter and the entire stewards and managers of the churches of the south. He informed them of his safe arrival in Madras and that he had delivered the letters of the patriarch to the governor, but received no response. He also asked them to write to the governor, as he had verbally told the priest Philip. On May 26, he addressed to them a second letter from the Armenian Church in Madras reminding them of this first letter. He says that he was expecting them to act immediately according to it. He also informs them that the governor of Madras has addressed to him two letters through his secretary dated May 25. In one of them he says that the governor of Bombay informed him of his (Athanasius Stephen) arrival and for this reason he wrote to the Resident to extend help to him. The question is why did not the Resident help him or allow him to control the Syrian churches according to the order of the Patriarch of Antioch? The governor of Madras, however, advised Stephen to discuss this matter with the churches. Thus, he (Athanasius Stephen) implores them to address an urgent letter to the governor. He says that if the governor needed more explanation, he would provide him with what is necessary.

On July 16, Athanasius Stephen sent a reply from the Armenian Church to the priest Philip. He told him that the governor had addressed another letter asking him not to address letters to him but to the Resident concerning control of the churches. He is the one to decide this matter. Therefore, Stephen says, that he wrote to the monk Simon to take care of this matter. He also addressed a letter to the Resident about the same. He goes on to say that he would remain in Madras until he received an answer. He complains that, at Madras, he feels tired and lonely because there were no Syrians in the city and he has no place to celebrate the Holy Eucharist except at the Armenian Church. But he does not like to do so because the Armenians want him to celebrate the Eucharist with unleavened bread. Moreover, he says the churches have kept silent and he has not received one letter or aid from them. He says that Cyril does not seem to care. If he antagonized him, the rights of the Apostolic See would be jeopardized and

Cyril would become his enemy, especially if he learned that the churches were corresponding with him. Therefore, Athanasius Stephen says that he addressed a letter to the monk Simon to prevail on the priests Philip, and Cyril and Ayyupen, to write to him in order to leave Madras, lest they chastise him for leaving it without a letter from them.

Athanasius Stephen further says in the letter that he has been four months in Madras and received no response except for a letter from the priest Philip. He rejoins that neither the British Resident nor the prime minister or the king (raja) causes grief to the fathers delegated by the Apostolic See, but the Syrian people themselves do. In fact, some of whom as you (priest Philip) testified were communicating duplicitously with Matta and Cyril, and they are the real trouble makers. He urges priest Philip to visit with Dionysius and with Abraham Konat. He asks him to address letters to Cyril and to monk Simon to convene a general meeting in one of the churches. He urges these dignitaries to write letters in their name and the name of their churches and send them to the Resident. These letters, he says, will be the same as the letter he addressed to the monk Simon. It contained the following, "If you do not conclude the case of our fathers (the metropolitans) and permit them to visit the churches and preach without hindrance according to the law of her majesty the Queen of England, we will close down our churches and send you their keys." Stephen further asks them to inform him that in case the Resident and the king (raja) did not respond, he would then inform the governor accordingly. If they carry on this task with determination, he would then remain in Madras. Otherwise, if he (Philip) stays at home and malphono (teacher) Abraham Konat stays at his church, and monk Simon stays at the school (doing nothing about church problems), and Cyril remains preoccupied with his own affairs, and Dionysius III is what he is, what is he (Stephen) then doing staying in Madras?

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: BISHOP STEPHEN APPEALS THE CASE TO LONDON**

Upon receiving Bishop Stephen's letter at the church of Arthat-Kunnamkulam, monk Simon went to Parur to discuss it with Dionysius. At Mulanthuruthi, he addressed a letter to the bishop on August 15. He also wrote to the priest Philip at Kandanad, after consulting with the priest Abraham Konat. He suggested that both of them should write to the churches of the south to sign the letter to be delivered to the Resident. Finally, in the summer of 1850, Bishop Stephen returned to Malabar. He complained to the priest Philip about the prevarication of Dionysius and his unfulfilled

promises. He also complained that Dionysius did not pay the expenses he had promised. He further stated that Dionysius fled stealthily from Kayankulam to the north where he ordained deacons contrary to the promises he had made. Also, he dispatched to Dionysius Alexander, priest of Malevikara, and had a long conversation with him.

The churches of Puthencave, Kalloopara and Mavelikara wanted to invite Stephen but he decided to go to Rani which was free from factions. He resided in Madras more than a year defending the case of the church of Malabar. In his tract on the Church of Malabar written in Arabic, the deacon Stephen of Azekh says that Stephen challenged his opponents, restrained Athanasius Matta and never participated with him. He courageously reproved the rulers for their unfair actions and constantly confronted them with the patriarch's excommunication of Matta. At court, he roared against Matta and made him tremble. But the excommunicated Matta kept producing letters sealed by Cyril and monk Simon. He also produced the *systaticon*, which he received from the patriarch together with the decree of the government confuting the bishop's claim of his excommunication.

On July 15, 1852, the Travancore government, influenced by the British Resident Cullen, issued a decision No. 249, prescribing that all the Syrians should accept Matta as their metropolitan if he is endorsed by the government. In fact, the royal decree issued to Matta's predecessors only concerned their appointments. One exception is that the decree issued in 1852 was predicated on the patriarch's *systaticon*.

Resident Cullen forbade Cyril and Stephen from staying in Travancore and Cochin. Cyril went to live in British Cochin. In May, 1853, Cyril presided over a meeting convened by a group of Syrians loyal to the Apostolic See to discuss the case of the excommunicated Matta and the churches he had usurped. On July 19, Matta addressed a letter from the church of Kondra to Philip, priest of the less Kottayam church, marked by arrogance and snobbery. It reveals what he was thinking of the meeting. He said,

Athanasius (Matta), metropolitan of the See of Malabar

"Beloved Friend,

I received your letters delivered to me by mail and understood their contents. What benefit do malphono (teacher) Konat and Marcus gain by the coming of Cyril to Cochin? Their meeting is useless and their advice is split and deficient because they do not seek the glory of the Lord and the benefit of his church, but their own glory and mischief. I am not afraid of their envy, but will come to Kottayam soon, God willing, and then return to visit the

churches. Don't worry about the letter you have addressed to me and the letter received from the Resident because they concern the seminary. Because this is the time of starvation, the churches have no funds."

After two years Bishop Stephen left Malabar. During the period from Pentecost, 1850, to May 18, 1852, he ordained two priests, nine deacons and seven Psalters. He consecrated three churches and eighty-three *tablithos*. On September 1, 1852, he departed Cochin for Alleppy. On September 13, he journeyed to Ceylon, Singapore and then Bengal reaching Calcutta on April 20, 1854. He then traveled to Madras and Bombay.<sup>540</sup> He met with the British authorities and discussed the affairs of the Syrian church. In January, 1855, he sailed to London carrying recommendations from the governments of Bengal and Madras to obtain high orders from the British government. In Egypt, he conducted religious services at our Syrian church of Mar Behnam. In June, he left for London reaching it on July 18, 1855.<sup>541</sup>

On September 5, Cyril addressed a letter from the church of Pallikara to the Chorepiscopus Philip saying, "Last January, Bishop Stephen left Bombay for Egypt. He was ready to travel to England to obtain an order for his return to Malabar. He carried many letters from the rulers of Bengal and Madras for his assistance. I don't know if he has already left for London or not."

In London, Bishop Stephen appealed the case of the church of Malabar to the Court of Directors of the East India Company. But since the laws of the British government forbid interference in religious affairs, the Court of Directors repealed the unfair verdict of the Resident. It left the matter of accepting or rejecting the delegates of the See of Antioch alone to the discretion of the Syrian church of Malabar. It issued a decision regarding this case No. 6, 1857. Thus, Cyril won freedom to travel throughout Malabar without impediment. However, we have seen him earlier meet with Matta on December 23, 1854, at the seminary of Kottayam. He and Matta agreed that the latter should ask the patriarch for forgiveness. In fact, Cyril absolved him from the excommunication after obtaining order from the patriarch on February 2, 1856 as shall be seen shortly.

About this time, priest Philip addressed a letter to the priest Yuhanna Konat saying, "A verdict has been issued in London in favor of the fathers. Our Lord the Patriarch had already written to London (about the case of

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<sup>540</sup> Barsoum. *History of the Syrian Dioceses*.

<sup>541</sup> Barsoum, *Ibid*.

the Malabar church). Accordingly, the English government has no power to deport the fathers sent by the patriarch. I feel sad for our efficient malpho-no (teacher) the priest Abraham Konat for getting so old. I feel also sad for myself for advancing in years. But I am hopeful that my labor shall not be in vain."

## CHAPTER NINE: DIONYSIUS IV

Upon the death of Dionysius III and his commemoration forty days later, the Syrian people gathered to elect his successor. They consulted with the Anglican missionaries. Meantime, Philoxenus II, the Anjoorian<sup>542</sup> came to Kottayam. The missionaries' choice was the priest Joseph Adangapurath, of the church of Kloparrā, for his inclinations toward them. But the Syrian people proposed the names of four priests well versed in knowledge. They are the already mentioned priest Joseph, the priest Abraham Konat, teacher of Mammalssery (candidate of the Syrians of the north), priest Philip Appel-mottal of Cheppat (candidate of the Syrians of the south), and the priest Mark Irritekel of the church of Kottayam. The missionaries, however, insisted on choosing a candidate who favors their principles. A lot was cast and Philip of Cheppat, candidate of the Syrians of the south, won. When some objected to his choice, a second ballot was taken and Philip again was the winner. On August 15, 1825, Philip was ordained a metropolitan by Philoxenus II, the Anjoorian at the lesser church of Kandand with the name of Dionysius IV. A royal decree was duly issued for his confirmation.<sup>543</sup>

Dionysius IV was born in the village of Cheppat in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and was named Philip. His father was Alexander Annilimottal.<sup>544</sup> When still young, he studied under the priest Abraham Konat and mastered the church melodies.<sup>545</sup> He was ordained a priest.

Philip was of a reprobate character since he was a deacon.<sup>546</sup> When he received the uncanonical episcopal dignity, he administered the church of Malabar jointly with the Anglicans.<sup>547</sup> He connived with them and with Philoxenus the Anjoorians to have Metropolitan Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih

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<sup>542</sup> of Thoziyur. TRANS.

<sup>543</sup> Joseph Ittoop Ritter, 197.

<sup>544</sup> See a tract on the history of the church of Malabar written around 1841.

<sup>545</sup> See a tract by the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat still in manuscript form.

<sup>546</sup> See a tract on the history of the church of Malabar written around 1841.

<sup>547</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the priest Philip Edavazhikal.

deported.<sup>548</sup> After the deportation of 'Abd al-Masih, the Anjoorian returned to his residence while Dionysius kept administering the church jointly with the missionaries who had then established a firm foot in Malabar. Meantime, the priests Gewargis of Miraman and Marcus Irritekil taught at the seminary under the missionaries' supervision. Upon the death of Philoxenus the Anjoorian in 1830, Dionysius went to Anjoor and ordained, illegally of course, Gewargis from the diocese of Anjoor who was only a mere layman, a bishop with the name of Cyril III<sup>549</sup> to succeed Philoxenus the Anjoorian, as testified by the priests of the church of Arthat.<sup>550</sup> It happened then that conflict ensued between Dionysius and the Anglicans which caused a rift as was said earlier. Dionysius abdicated his office and the authority of the laying on of the hands and addressed a letter to Patriarch Elias II to delegate to Malabar metropolitans and provide them with the service book of festivals for the whole year. But his intention was dishonest. Indeed, some clergy and laymen, including the priests Abraham Konat and Philip Edavazhikal, had met in 1841 at the church of Kandanad when Marugi came to Malabar carrying a proclamation of Patriarch Elias II promising to send metropolitans to take care of them. They wrote a letter, actually a historical tract, about the church of Malabar. It was delivered to the metropolitans, who were to be delegated to Malabar, in order to present it to the patriarch. In this letter or a tract, they censured Dionysius and warned the fathers against him. They appealed to the patriarch not to absolve him from the excommunication. They further said that they would never call him a metropolitan or accept him as such. They would never even eat and drink with him as a brother or a friend. They determined to retrieve from him all the silver and gold vessels which belonged to the metropolitans together with the seminary's account. They declared that they would refuse to have him administer the Syrian churches as a metropolitan in the future. They indicated that if he appealed to them to have him ordained a metropolitan for Malabar; they would say that they are not authorized by the patriarch to do so. They asserted that they are alone the shepherds of the flock. They informed the forthcoming metropolitans to Malabar that upon their arrival they would discover the true state of affairs. Furthermore, they say that Marugi would apprise them of all that he has heard and seen about Dionysius Cheppat because they are ashamed of relating his deeds. In addition, they

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<sup>548</sup> See above Book Four: Chapter Thirteen. TRANS.

<sup>549</sup> See a tract on the church of Malabar by the priest Philip Edavazhikal.

<sup>550</sup> See a tract on the history of the church of Malabar written around 1841.



say that Dionysius claims that the Syrian Church and Mar Ignatius (the patriarch) and the entire Syrians have ceased to exist. Dionysius had also accused the priests Abraham Konat and Philip Edavazhikal of planting the seeds of sedition in Malabar and some people already believed him.<sup>551</sup>

Church affairs worsened when Athanasius Matta deceived Patriarch Elias II and unlawfully had him ordain him a bishop in 1842. Dionysius realized that his position was threatened, especially when the clergy and lay people loyal to the Apostolic See, wrote to the patriarch against him. And when the patriarch delegated to Malabar Metropolitan Cyril Joakim, Dionysius paid some of his journey's expenses and cooperated with him to expel Athanasius Matta. But their efforts failed as said earlier. And when in 1849, Patriarch Jacob II sent Bishop Stephen as an Apostolic Delegate to Malabar to put things in order, Dionysius cooperated with him though his dignity was uncanonical. Now we see him address, through the delegates, a covenant to the Patriarch of Antioch and to the kings (rajas) of Malabar and to the British Resident pledging no more to perform sacerdotal services. Still, the Syrian fathers sought his advice regarding the problems which then confronted the church. Moreover, Bishop Stephen Joakim accused him of receiving bribes and ordaining clergymen without the consent of the people. This was confirmed by the tract written in Syriac by some clergymen and laymen at Kandanaḍ in 1841. It shows that when Dionysius became strong enough, he sold the dignity of a deacon for a hundred rupees and that of a priest for two hundred and fifty rupees. In fact, when this tract was written, Dionysius had in his possession fifty thousand rupees of which not a single penny was paid to the seminary. All that he possessed belonged to Dionysius I and to the fathers who hailed from Antioch. They included gold miters, rings, a silver staff, vestments, chalices, patens, hand and chest crosses and the silver vessels which he used.

Finally, Dionysius resigned his position and lived in Cheppat where he died an old man on September 27, 1855. He was buried by Athanasius Matta in the church of Cheppat who took his vestment and the famous copper royal decree which was in his possession.

Dionysius IV was endowed with a melodious voice. He mastered the chorals of the Syrian church and had experience of religious sciences. We have come upon two letters written by him one addressed to the church of Rani on April 3, 1832, shortly ordaining for it a priest named Abraham. The second letter was addressed from the seminary at Kottayam in June 24,

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<sup>551</sup> The letter is at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

1846, to Metropolitan Cyril Joakim when he arrived at Bombay. It was mentioned in the letter of the priest Philip Edavazhikal sent from Bombay on July 13, 1845. Following is a gist of this letter.

“In the name of the Lord your preserver, who has magnified your episcopal dignity, glory to him.

Our Father, Metropolitan Mar Cyril, the wise and well versed in the Scriptures and the Syriac language. Amen.

We have been informed that you are coming to us from our Lord the Patriarch Mar Ignatius, the chief shepherd and lord of lords. Thus, we are filled with joy. So far, however, you did not send us a letter. Our heart is very heavy because of the deception of wicked men especially Metropolitan Matta. In his heart he was concealing his intention to deceive the people. He stayed with the king (raja) about ten months in order to obtain a royal decree.”

Dionysius VI composed a sixty-one line hymn in the tune of “Who was killed in Egypt” in praise of Mar Behnam, his sister Sarah and forty martyred companions.

## CHAPTER TEN: BISHOP STEPHEN AND HIS RETINUE RETURN TO THE APOSTOLIC SEE

Bishop Stephen exerted commendable efforts in the cause of the church of Malabar in India and in London.<sup>552</sup> Having obtained the protection of England, he departed London at the end of 1856 and had an audience with the patriarch in Amid.<sup>553</sup> In 1857, his efforts were crowned with success as the Court of Directors in London issued a verdict in favor of the church. However, despite this verdict, the excommunicated Matta pleaded to the prime minister in Travancore saying that he cannot not administer his churches properly because a man named Metropolitan Cyril keeps in communion with them. In response, the British Resident interfered in this matter. He issued order No. 2455, 1863, to the entire country of Travancore forbidding those who do not recognize Matta’s authority from entering the churches and celebrating the Holy Eucharist. But if they decided to accept Cyril they would have full freedom to do so. If not, they should build new churches and leave the old ones for Matta.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> See the metrical hymn by the deacon Stephen.

<sup>553</sup> His Holiness Patriarch Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*.

<sup>554</sup> *Travancore State Manual*, III, 218.

It was reported that the patriarch dismissed Bishop Stephen upon his return from London for his leaning towards the Anglicans concerning some church rituals especially the episcopal vestment. Nonetheless, he returned to the Jazira as its bishop for a time.<sup>555</sup> On February 26, 1873, priest Philip addressed to him a letter saying, "At present, the entire churches of Malabar are in turmoil and deplorable condition worse than when you were here. The old priests and laymen have passed away and the new ones are not like them. You have seen everything with your own eyes. If you then have any compassion, please help Malabar with everything you can." He goes on to inform him about the priests and notable whom he knew and now they are dead. Among them was the priest Joseph who accompanied him to Madras.

In the autumn of 1869, Bishop Stephen passed away in the Jazira and was buried in its church.<sup>556</sup> He had several letters in Syriac addressed to the clergy of Malabar excerpts of which have been given in the previous chapters. He also left a lengthy proclamation on Lent addressed from the church of Mar Gurgis in Kernkashra, Cochin, to the churches of Malabar in 1850.<sup>557</sup> Also, he left a testimony which he delivered from the church of Mulanthuruthi on June 13, 1850, to the priest Philip Edavazhikal (later Chorepiscopus) for the occasion of his ordination a deacon.<sup>558</sup>

It is likely that Bishop Stephen and his associates did not leave Malabar together. The bishop and his brother, Maqdisi Hanna, left first followed by the monks Simon and Gurgis. Monk Simon parted the bishop's company and went to Egypt in the middle of 1853. He arrived at the Patriarchal residence before September 5, 1855.<sup>559</sup>

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE COMING OF EUSTATHIUS 'ABD AL-NUR, METROPOLITAN OF JERUSALEM TO MALABAR

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the See of St. James, brother of the Lord, was adorned by a remarkable father. He is the late Metropolitan Mar Eustathius 'Abd al-Nur son of Mikha'il Kashish Oghli al-Ruhawi (of

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<sup>555</sup> Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*.

<sup>556</sup> Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*.

<sup>557</sup> This proclamation is at the library of Mar Ignatius in Omalloor, Malabar.

<sup>558</sup> A copy is with the family of Edavazhikal and another in my possession.

<sup>559</sup> See the letter of Metropolitan Cyril Joakim to the Chorepiscopus Philip dated September 5, 1855.

Edessa). He was born in al-Ruha (Edessa) around 1805.<sup>560</sup> As a young man he traveled to St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem in 1829 in the time of its superior Metropolitan 'Abd al-Ahad.<sup>561</sup> In 1833, the metropolitan invested him with the monastic habit. In the next year Patriarch Jirjis V (1819–1839) ordained him a priest in Diyarbakir. After the patriarch's death, monk 'Abd al-Nur accompanied Maphryono Elias to Constantinople as his interpreter because he knew Syriac, Arabic, Turkish and Armenian languages. When Maphryono Elias became patriarch on October 1, 1838, he took 'Abd al-Nur with him to Mosul and other dioceses. On June 7, 1840, he ordained him a metropolitan for the Patriarchal Office and called him Eustathius at his ordination. Upon the death of Metropolitan 'Abd al-Ahad of Jerusalem on December 14 of this year, the patriarch, in conformity with the decision of the synod, appointed him a metropolitan for Jerusalem at the beginning of 1841. Eustathius journeyed to St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem and found it overburdened with heavy debts which he determined to settle. In 1853, he traveled to Mardin to visit Patriarch Jacob II (1847–1871). He explained to him his intention to collect the fees due to St. Mark's Monastery.

The patriarch provided him with proclamations authorizing him to collect donations. He spent two years collecting funds and returned to Jerusalem on February 5, 1855. Realizing that the funds he collected were not sufficient, he determined to journey to Malabar, India to collect adequate funds. He was encouraged by Metropolitan Cyril Joakim, then Archbishop of India. On October 24, 1855, he left Jerusalem accompanied by his pupil the monk 'Abd Allah, son of Jacob Makhluḥ of Sadad. He left behind his second pupil the monk Jirjis Kassab as his deputy at St. Mark's Monastery.

Eustathius sailed from Yafa (Jaffa) to Alexandria in Egypt and then to Suez. He arrived in Bombay on December 11.<sup>562</sup> He stayed in the Armenian Church. He carried with him a letter and a gift from the British Consul Mr. Finn in Jerusalem to his friend the Anglican vicar Dr. Wilson in Bombay. He also carried a recommendation to the British governor of Bombay. Dr. Wilson received him with alacrity and provided him with a letter of recommendation from the governor of Bombay to the British Resident in Tra-

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<sup>560</sup> See the anonymous biography of Metropolitan Eustathius 'Abd al-Nur al-Ruhawi in *al-Hikma* (Jerusalem: 3, no. 7 (July, 1929, 306). It mentions that Eustathius 'Abd al-Nur was born around 1800. TRANS.

<sup>561</sup> Dakkala. TRANS.

<sup>562</sup> This account is Abridged from Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses, al-Hikma, Ibid.*, 307–312. TRANS.

vancore and Cochin.<sup>563</sup> Eustathius addressed a letter to Metropolitan Cyril Joakim informing him of his arrival at Bombay. On January 24, 1856, Cyril addressed a letter from Kurrumpampady to the priest Philip in answer to the latter's letter dated January 8 saying, "His Grace the Metropolitan of Jerusalem is coming to us accompanied by a venerable brother. They have reached Bombay and will be in Malabar without delay. Both are pious and desire good for our nation."

Eustathius spent sixty-five days in Bombay. On February 14, 1856, he left on a sail boat and reached the harbor of Cochin on the 25<sup>th</sup>, the evening of the commencement of Lent. He went up to the church which was built by Maphryono Shukr Allah where he was visited by Syrian people and some officials of the British administration. He was provided with an interpreter who spoke Arabic. At night he left on a boat for Kottayam. En route, he digressed into the Syrian church of St. Michael and performed the prayer of the first day of Lent. The parishioners duly informed the two metropolitans at the seminary of his coming. Maqdisi Gabriel, brother of Metropolitan Cyril Joakim and Rafful of Mosul, attendant of Metropolitan Athanasius Matta, accompanied Eustathius to the seminary. He was welcomed by the two metropolitans with great joy and pomp. It should be remembered that Athanasius Matta was then absolved by the patriarch of excommunication.<sup>564</sup>

The British Resident was then in Cochin. Metropolitan Eustathius 'Abd al-Nur and Matta addressed to him a joint letter to which they attached the recommendation of the governor of Bombay. The Resident replied that he had issued necessary orders to receive Metropolitan 'Abd al-Nur with honor on his travels.<sup>565</sup>

At Malabar, Metropolitan 'Abd al-Nur changed his ordination name of Eustathius into Gregorius according to the long standing tradition of the metropolitans of Jerusalem since the sixteenth century.

## CHAPTER TWELVE: THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF EUSTATHIUS 'ABD AL-NUR IN MALABAR

Upon his arrival at Kottayam in the first week of Lent, Metropolitan Eustathius 'Abd al-Nur celebrated the Holy Eucharist at the chapel of the seminary on the festival day of St. Ephraim. At the intimation of Athanasius

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<sup>563</sup> See Eustathius' journey to Malabar.

<sup>564</sup> See Eustathius' journey to Malabar.

<sup>565</sup> *Ibid.*

Matta, the parishioners of the lesser church of Kottayam accompanied him to their church in a magnificent ceremony where he celebrated the Holy Eucharist. Afterwards, he visited the Syrian churches of the south and collected donations for the church of Jerusalem. He visited forty churches first of which was the church of Niranam whose congregation numbered fifteen thousand. The last church he visited was Kumarakom. In all these churches he was received with great pomp. At the church of Tirulla, he attended the solemnization of the wedding of Maqdisi Gabriel, brother of Metropolitan Cyril Joakim. Also present, were Cyril Joakim and Athanasius Matta. At the church of Kadmapanad, he replaced the wooden altar with three stone altars. The wooden altar was fixed according to the custom of the Latins whose priests celebrated several Eucharists successively. Also, the altar had no space to turn around it.<sup>566</sup> At the church of Karthipally he baptized in a single ceremony seventeen children and performed the Candle Rite for six patients. At the church of Mavelikara the priests baptized in one ceremony thirty children and were blessed by Eustathius. The church of Rani presented him with ivory to be manufactured into a pastoral staff for the church of Jerusalem.<sup>567</sup>

After visiting the churches of the south, Eustathius addressed a letter to the priest Malphono Abraham Konat informing him of his desire to visit the churches of the north. The reason is that Abraham Konat was the teacher of fifty churches in the north and all the priests and deacons were his pupils. In addition, Abraham Konat himself had invited Eustathius to pay him a visit. Upon receiving his letter, Abraham Konat sent priests, deacons and the notables to welcome Eustathius. In the account of his journey to Malabar, Eustathius listed the names of six churches he visited not to mention the names of forty other churches he did not visit. Abraham Konat's church of Pampakoda was the first in the north which Eustathius visited. At the lesser church of Kothamangalam, he tried to remove the wooden canopy over the grave of Maphryono Yalda, but the people objected. But at the same church, he removed two canopies and replaced the wooden altars with stone ones and consecrated them. At the church of Rackat, he found a grave with the name of Metropolitan Iyawannis Hidyat Allah who had built that church. After many attempts, he convinced the

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<sup>566</sup> This was the case of the altars in the Syrian churches. TRANS.

<sup>567</sup> See the account of his journey to Malabar.

congregation to remove it from the altar and fix it in the chancel (near the choir). The priests in this church numbered seven.<sup>568</sup>

The interpreter of Eustathius was a priest named Alexander.<sup>569</sup> Eustathius spent two years in India during which he meticulously recorded his observation of things small and great. He described the geography of the towns he passed through with minute details.<sup>570</sup>

In January, 1857, Eustathius visited the greater church of Kottayam. On January 19, he wrote down in the copy of the anaphora belonging to the Chorepiscopus Philip the following, "Father Mar Gregorius 'Abd al-Nur al-Ruhawi of Mesopotamia and Metropolitan of the See of Jerusalem, visited this Greater Church of the Mother of God in Kottayam in the time of our Blessed Lord and Beloved by God Mar Ignatius Jacob II, Patriarch of Antioch. He collected alms and donations from the clergy and lay people of Malabar and the faithful believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, by the effort of the chief priest our Father Mar Cyril Joakim of Hbob in Tur 'Abdin, for the relief of the holy Church of Jerusalem which houses Christ's glorious Sepulcher. May God reward with goodness and blessings those who endeavored and labored to keep this holy place intact? Amen. January 19, 1875. Glory to God forever." Eustathius was accompanied by his pupil the monk 'Abd Allah of Sadad from Syria.<sup>571</sup>

On June 8, 1857, the monk 'Abd Allah addressed a letter from the church of Chattokulam in reply to the Chorepiscopus Philip saying, "Metropolitan 'Abd al-Nur toiled much in touring the churches of the north because of the rite of the church and the difference in the locations of the altars everywhere. With tremendous effort he built stone altars in many places according to the custom of our church. He visited the entire churches of the north until he reached Chattokulam. He (and his attendant monk 'Abd Allah) shall return soon to Cochin and will inform you of the details of their journey."

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<sup>568</sup> When I was in Malabar I composed a metrical ode in the Sarugite (twelve) meters in praise of Metropolitan Iyawannis Hidayat Allah at the request of the venerable priest Joseph of Anatotallum of the Rackat church, to be chanted at his annual commemoration.

<sup>569</sup> See the letter of the monk 'Abd Allah of Sadad, Eustathius's pupil, to the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal dated June 8, 1857.

<sup>570</sup> See the account of his journey in the Library of St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem.

<sup>571</sup> This account is written in the anaphora in the possession of the Edavazhikal family.

In the fall of 1857, Eustathius returned to Jerusalem and began to renovate St. Mark's Monastery. He completed its renovation in 1858 in its present condition. He also purchased a piece of land for the monastery near the Moscovite Land with three hundred liras and planted a vineyard in it.<sup>572</sup>

Eustathius passed away on April 8, 1877 and was buried in the chapel of St. Mark's Monastery. On February 26, 1863, the priest Philip wrote to Metropolitan Athanasius Stephen, already mentioned, reminding him of the journey of Metropolitan 'Abd al-Nur to India. He said, "Our Father Metropolitan 'Abd al-Nur came to India and visited the churches. He was offered donations of about ten thousand rupees for Jerusalem." In his history, 273, Joseph Ittoop Ritter wrote that this Metropolitan<sup>573</sup> visited Athanasius Matta and all the churches collecting donations for the church of the Resurrection. In the south, he collected 6500 rupees and in the north, 3000 rupees. Also, the monk ('Abd Allah of Sadad) collected 800 rupees. Athanasius Matta and Cyril (Joakim) bid them farewell with joy."

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE DESTRUCTIVE ACTS OF MATTA IN THE SYRIAN CHURCH

These acts could be summarized as follows:

1) Spreading the Protestant (Anglican) heresies among the believers in the churches. 2) Rebelling against the See of Antioch and ordaining, uncanonically, two bishops: one named Cyril and the other Athanasius Tuma. Cyril was meant for the Anjoorians while the Athanasius Tuma, his cousin, was to succeed him. Moreover, he used his seal with red ink considering himself a patriarch. 3) His reprehensible conduct. 4) Distorting church ritual books to render them conform to the Anglican faith. Matta did not commit all these things at once, but gradually.

On December 23, 1854, Cyril and Matta met at the seminary in Kottayam. They agreed that Matta should appeal to the patriarch for forgiveness and absolution. He did. The patriarch forgave him and authorized Cyril to absolve him. Cyril absolved him on February 2, 1856,<sup>574</sup> hoping that he would reform. He also thought that his absolution would be in the best interest of the Syrian denomination which was in turmoil. But in this same year, Matta revealed his ill intentions. Upon the death of the so-called Cyril

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<sup>572</sup> See *Al-Hikma*, 3, No. 7, (Jerusalem, July, 1929), 312. TRANS.

<sup>573</sup> 'Abd al-Nur.

<sup>574</sup> Barsoum, *History of the Syrian Dioceses*.



III, the Anjoorian,<sup>575</sup> Matta had the audacity to ordain a successor named Cyril Joseph Altokarn. Also, he ordained widower priests and deacons and permitted them to remarry. He openly used simony<sup>576</sup> and imbibed alcohol to the point of intoxication.

Metropolitan Eustathius ‘Abd al-Nur al-Ruhawi said, “I witnessed at the church of Maramon, Matta’s village, customs different from those in other churches. The faithful do not sign the cross upon entering the church, or when the deacons march around in a procession at the nave. During the Celebration of the Eucharist, they do not light candles. They use no censor or chant the hymn of “By the prayer of your Mother who gave birth to you” which opens the Mass together with the prayers prescribed by the Syrian fathers. They do not remember the deceased in their liturgy which is different from our own liturgy. Evidently, the faithful are forced to accept these changes by order of the court. In fact, Matta’s faction keeps disputing these matters with the congregation. Also, Matta does not personally want a metropolitan of the Apostolic See to take charge of the congregation. So, he daily drives away Metropolitan Cyril using court orders. Moreover, Matta married widower priests who kept serving at the altar. He even ordained a priest who was a husband of a widow. He printed small prayer pamphlets in Malayalam from which were removed prayers to the Virgin and many other matters.”<sup>577</sup>

When Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Nur was at the church of Puthupally, he was visited by Matta after a relapse of ten months. Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Nur learned that Matta was on his way to the court to have Metropolitan Cyril Joakim expelled. He claims that the metropolitans of the See of Antioch have no authority in Malabar. He further claims that he has a teacher at the seminary who taught dogmas contrary to the Syrian church canons. Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Nur advised him to desist from such actions. He also testified that on the next day Matta went to the seminary bargaining with some clergy in order to ordain them priests and psalters if they paid him money. One of them was a deacon who was married a second time. Another priest whose father was a follower of the Anglicans was baptized by

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<sup>575</sup> See the journey of Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Nur to Malabar.

<sup>576</sup> Selling priestly offices for money. TRANS.

<sup>577</sup> See the journey of Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Nur to Malabar.

them. He also ordained five psalters.<sup>578</sup> From all the ordained, he received 700 rupees.<sup>579</sup>

In his metrical ode, the deacon Stephen of Azekh, already mentioned, said,

“Three wolves ravaged the small flock: Matta, Joseph and Tuma. They disturbed its beliefs, canons, rituals and noble traditions. They drank excessively and blasphemed the patriarch and the saints. They pillaged the alms and fees of the church. Their drinking is not free from abominable behavior. They have laid hands on many rich churches, and as a result, prayers ceased. After Matta won the case against the church, he installed his cousin and another person as bishops, illegally of course. He called the one Athanasius Tuma, and the other Cyril Yusuf. He exacted from them a covenant for their submission to him and for persecuting the delegates of the Apostolic See. Thus, they abolished fasts and ordained priests who were twice married. They administered the communion claiming that the elements were mere bread and wine. Furthermore, Matta declares that he was a patriarch and the successor of the See of St. Thomas. He signs his letters in red ink. He printed in Madras the *Shhimo*<sup>580</sup> and a copy of the half-Mass according to the Anglican usage and order. He had them distributed in his village of Miraman. Only his clan executes his orders. In fact, there are only five churches which use these books. But he failed to deceive other churches. He tried several times to implement the contrived changes but no one accepted them. The natives of his village, however, obeyed them for fear of his mighty blows. Indeed, he was wont to beat his clergy with sticks when drunk.”

Stephen of Azekh went on to say, “Matta deleted from the liturgy the introductory prayer of the Dispensation and the name of the Virgin Mary. From the *Shhimo*, he deleted the supplication to the Virgin Mary, the saints and the prayers for the deceased. In this regard, he is in agreement with his Anglicans friends not because they appreciate him, but because he supports them in altering the Syrian rituals to suit their own rituals. For this reason, the Anglicans write in their newspaper that he is unique. In fact, he printed in their press pamphlets in Malayalam in which were deleted the prayers to the Virgin and the saints and the supplications for the deceased. They were circulated among the Syrians.”

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<sup>578</sup> Psalter is the lowest rank of the diaconate. TRANS.

<sup>579</sup> See the journey of Metropolitan ‘Abd al-Nur to Malabar.

<sup>580</sup> Service Book for the Whole Week. TRANS.

This is how Matta propagated his destructive principles among the Syrians. With a pickaxe in his hand, he tried to destroy the edifice of the orthodox faith. But he was careful not to do so except in opportune circumstances. For instance, He did not explicitly deny the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch, or affect great changes in the form of worship for fear of creating commotion or rebellion of the people. On the one hand, he pretended that he was a loyal deputy of the Apostolic See. He remembered the name of the patriarch in the usual services. He also commanded the ordained to submit to the authority of the patriarch. On the other hand, he tried to impose his corrupt principles on the church. In sum, he behaved like a Chamaeleon. He considered himself a Jew among the Jews and a pagan among the pagans. And when he was in the company of the orthodox Syrians, he pretended to be orthodox. On the contrary, when he found himself among people weak in faith, he declared openly his venomous principles. This is in addition to his repugnant conduct which marred his episcopal dignity. It proved that he was unfit to be a good example. Nevertheless, the Anglicans lauded him. They assisted him expecting he would propagate his principles among the Syrians.

The Syrian community was displeased with Matta. It could not tolerate his malicious actions. But the royal decree and the order of the prime minister have tied his hands so much that even the rulers of the country would not listen to his appeals. Indeed, the British Resident, whose friends and cronies were the missionaries, was ever ready to help him.<sup>581</sup>

#### **CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE CHURCH OF MALABAR ATTEMPTS TO HAVE THE APOSTOLIC SEE DISPATCH DELEGATES**

In 1861, Metropolitan Cyril Joakim and priest Philip addressed a letter to Patriarch Jacob II appealing to him to send two venerable metropolitans and four monks well versed in the Syriac language to Malabar. On February 1, 1862, the Chorepiscopus Yalda and some Syrian notables of Mosul addressed a letter to Cyril Joakim in reply to his letters informing him that they have delivered his letter to the patriarch. They beseeched the patriarch

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<sup>581</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 201–204. The translator may add that E. M. Philip has detailed the repulsive conduct of Athanasius Matta and the damage he did to the Syrian Church. The least he said about him was that “He was an opportunist in the worst sense of the term...he has undoubtedly done irreparable mischief to the community.” E. M. Philip, *Ibid.*, 202. TRANS.

to respond to his request. They also asked Cyril to forward a thousand rupees for the expense of the clergymen to be delegated to Malabar.

Cyril, the clergy and laymen of the church of Kolancherry, addressed a letter to some notable Syrians of Mosul asking them to contact the patriarch in order to delegate to Malabar two bishops and four venerable monks. They also pledged a thousand rupees for their passage which they would immediately deliver as soon as they received his reply. On November 21, 1862, these notables wrote to the priest Philip informing him of this letter and that the patriarch, after consecrating the Holy Chrism at the Church of the Monastery Mar Quryaqos, returned to Amid to receive the medal granted him by the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Aziz.

On March 1, 1863, Patriarch Jacob II sent a proclamation to the church of Malabar. He also addressed a letter to the priest Philip informing him of his receipt of letters from Malabar and that he responded to them. He goes on to say that, like his predecessors, he has delegated metropolitans to Malabar. But, as it is known, no benefit was gained by their delegation for the congregation, the monasteries or the churches. He further says that he has consecrated the Holy Chrism on the Sunday of the Consecration of the Church at the Monastery of Mar Quryaqos in Bushairiyya in the presence of the metropolitans and community notables. After the service, the dignitaries met to discuss the request of the Malabar Syrians. They decided to ask the Malabarians to select proficient and qualified clergymen and send them to the Patriarchal Office to be trained in the administration of the church. The patriarch would then ordain them metropolitans for the different dioceses of Malabar.

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE ORDINATION OF THE PRIEST JOSEPH PULIKKOTT A METROPOLITAN**

Upon receiving the patriarch's order and viewing his general proclamation which was read in the churches, priest Philip discussed secretly with the community their contents. They resolved to send the priest Joseph Pulikkott to the patriarch to ordain him a metropolitan for Malabar instead of the excommunicated Matta. Philip addressed to some Syrian notables of Mosul a letter. He informed them that the community of Malabar had found the priest Joseph a qualified person and worthy of the episcopal dignity. He said that Malabarians are waiting for the patriarch's permission in order to send Joseph to him. The notables replied on November 1, 1863, that they had received his letter and the letter of his son the Chorepiscopus Philip. They also said that they had addressed a letter to the patriarch concerning Joseph

and would inform him of the result when they received a response from him.

Priest Philip received this letter but did not act accordingly. He did not wait for the patriarch's approval regarding Joseph's selection fearing that his plan would fail. He forged letters in the name of Cyril Joakim and of a few priests and notables which he labeled "The letters of Joseph's election." He handed them over to Joseph in order to deliver them to the patriarch.<sup>582</sup> Joseph was a celibate young man from the town of Kunnankulam and a priest of the church of Arthat. He was grandson of the brother of Dionysius II who established the Seminary at Kottayam.

On April 5, 1864, Joseph left Malabar in the company of another priest named Matthu (Matta), an attendant named Dawud (David) and another priest named Gurgis Matthuman. Joseph arrived in Mosul on June 18.<sup>583</sup> In July, he journeyed to Mardin. He remained in that city awaiting the arrival of Patriarch Jacob II who was then in Amid (Diyarbakir).

Priest Philip had already addressed a letter to the Syrian notables of Mosul through Mr. Rassam, the British Consul in that city. He informed them that priest Joseph Pulikkot would leave Malabar on April 5 bound for the Apostolic See. He asked them to take care of him and write to Mardin and Amid (Diyarbakir) urging the patriarch to ordain him and send him back soon to Malabar. On June 25, 1845, they replied informing him of the arrival of Joseph and his companions in Mosul, and that agents in that city and in Baghdad and Kirkuk had taken care of them. They further said that they would dispatch him to Mardin within twenty or thirty days.

In August, the patriarch came to Mardin and found Joseph and his companions waiting for him. He received the letters they carried from Malabar and read them with joy. Shortly afterwards, his joy turned into sorrow. He was suddenly confronted with letters from Cyril Joakim which upset the whole situation in Malabar. On September 2, he addressed a letter to Eustathius 'Abd al-Nur, metropolitan of Jerusalem, informing him of the situation and asking him to proceed to the Patriarchal Residence.

Apparently, Cyril had addressed letters to the notables of Mosul and Mardin in June 23, asking them to acquire from the congregation of the church of Arthat in Kunnankulam, a recommendation about the qualifications of the priest Joseph. In fact, in their already mentioned letter dated

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<sup>582</sup> See the letter of Cyril Joakim to Patriarch Jacob II in the spring of 1866.

<sup>583</sup> See the letter of deacon Behnam, 'Abd al-Ahad 'Abd al-Nur and Butrus Kassab to the priest Philip dated June 25, 1864.

June 25, 1864, addressed to Cyril, the notables of Mosul said that Cyril had informed them of the necessity of obtaining a recommendation from the church of Kunnamkulam showing that the congregation was satisfied with the ordination of Joseph as a metropolitan. Now, they were confronted by Joseph carrying their signed letter which contained their recommendation of having him ordained a metropolitan. But, in their reply to the letter of the priest Philip dated April 3, they said, "Cyril says in his letter dated June 3, that if the Lord Patriarch wished, let him write to Joseph's congregation, to the priest Jacob Pankal, his cousin Gurgis, Jacob Pannakal, Simon Paramil and to the notables of the churches of the north asking them for an oath whether they were truly anxious to have the priest Joseph ordained a metropolitan for India." For this reason, the notables of Mosul implored the patriarch to obtain from them testimonies stamped by Cyril's seal and deliver them soon in order to reinforce their request. The point is, if the priest Joseph was carrying authentic testimonies from these churches, why should they (the notables of Mosul) demand the same a second time?

We came upon a Syriac letter at the Library of the priest Philip dated November 28, 1864, stamped with the seals of the priest Jacob and the notable Joseph Ipod Pankal of the church of Kunnamkulam, addressed to 'Abd al-'Ahad 'Abd al-Nur, the deacon Behnam 'Abd al-Nur and the church council of Mosul, acknowledging the receipt of their letter and testifying before God and the Lord Patriarch that he (priest Joseph) was eligible and worthy of the metropolitan dignity.

As for the Lord Patriarch, after careful scrutiny of the matter, he found it appropriate to answer the request of the priest Philip and his comrades. He did so during those difficult circumstances when the roaring billows of schism were pounding against the Church of Malabar to destroy it. He ordained the priest Joseph a metropolitan with the name Dionysius at the church of the Virgin in Amid (Diyarbakir) on April 18, 1865. The ordination was followed by a sumptuous banquet attended by a select group of Christians from different denominations. The patriarch presented the new metropolitan with the necessary articles needed by a chief priest including a large hand cross and a smaller beautiful chest cross set with gems and a vestment for the celebration of the Eucharist.

In May, Dionysius reached Mosul via the Tigris River and was received by the churches of the city with obvious pomp.

Upon receiving the news of the ordination of Dionysius Joseph, the priest Philip remitted to him an amount of money through the British General Consul in Baghdad.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN: CYRIL JOAKIM CONTESTS THE ORDINATION OF METROPOLITAN DIONYSIUS JOSEPH

Upon the return of Metropolitan Joseph to Malabar, Metropolitan Cyril Joakim lashed against his ordination. He used harsh language in his letters addressed to Patriarch Jacob II, to some metropolitans and to the councils of Mosul and Mardin. In his lengthy letter addressed to the patriarch sent from the church of Mulanthuruthi in the spring of 1866, Cyril wrote that a meeting was convened in the church of Kolenchery on February 12 at the request of the churches of the north and of Matta. It was attended by the delegates of the churches of the north and the south and by clergymen and laymen. They summoned Metropolitan Joseph three times through priests and stewards. But he refused to attend because he had forged the petition of his election for the episcopal office. The petition was signed by him and by some priests and notables. His action displeased even the congregation of his own church of Arthat in Kunnamkulam. And when two priests and twelve stewards planned a pompous reception for him in Cochin, according to his request, other priests and members of the Syrian community of that city objected. They complained against him to the king (raja) of Cochin, the prime minister and the British Resident. And when Joseph met with the Resident in Cochin, the Resident rebuked him for planning his reception. Joseph went to Pampakoda to seek an audience with Metropolitan Cyril who was residing at the lesser church of Vadakara. Cyril, beseeched by the priest Yuhanna Konat, agreed to pay him a visit.

Cyril, not only objected to Joseph's ordination but also to the ordination of any priest from Malabar. He said that Patriarch Elias II had provided him with the authority to ordain a metropolitan for Malabar if need be. He also authorized him to bind and loose, according to the circumstances, in his capacity as the Chief Prelate of Malabar. Still, under pressure of the rulers and the appeal of the community to ordain for them a metropolitan from Malabar, he refused saying that they should appeal to the patriarch in order to permit him to do so. He did this because the people of Malabar do not deserve to have *episcopi* of their own. In fact, the community of Malabar asked Cyril to ordain bishops better than those they already have. But he was thinking only of ordaining some as archdeacons. Even in this case he was not really interested in ordaining anyone.

Cyril also said that the bishop whom Matta had ordained wanted to repent and come unto him in order to have him absolved of his excommunication. Cyril thought if the bishop truly repented, he would then ordain him a mere priest, or an archdeacon or a chorepiscopus which by far is better than what he is now.

At the meeting of Kolenchery on February 12, the churches' delegates asked Cyril to address letters to all the churches in order to deliberate Matta's case. Cyril also wrote to the patriarch in order to absolve him from the excommunication based on the covenant which would be provided to him. Furthermore, he had twenty-one articles for Matta's reconciliation published in a newspaper in the Malayalam language. Matta rejected these articles because article thirteen categorically forbade a metropolitan to ordain a metropolitan. In fact, Matta wanted to ordain his cousin a bishop. He asked Cyril to join him in ordaining six more bishops. Cyril refused.

### **CHAPTER SEVENTEEN THE CATHOLICS OF MALABAR ATTEMPT TO ELIMINATE LATIN SUPREMACY**

Although some Syrians of Malabar were subjected to Rome, as previously said, they continued yearning for practicing their traditional rituals which had been marred by the Latins. They wanted to have their own bishops instead of Latin bishops. Therefore, they communicated with the Chaldean patriarchs in Mosul to ordain bishops for them.<sup>584</sup>

The Chaldean (Catholicos) Yusuf (Joseph) Odo, always wanted to ordain bishops for Malabar, but the Church of Rome prevented him from doing so. Overlooking Rome's orders, Odo and his bishops decided to ordain Tuma Rouckes an honorary bishop for Basra and then delegate him to Malabar. When Cardinal Bernabo, President of the Congregation de Propagation Fide, heard of this matter, he prevented Odo from interfering in the affairs of Malabar. Odo paid no attention to him and ordained Rouckes on September 30, 1860, and sent him to Malabar at the beginning of 1861. At Malabar, Rouckes ordained a great number of priests and deacons which caused more turmoil among the Catholics than ever. He could not stay too long in that country because he was resisted by the Latin bishops, the padres and their partisans. Cardinal Bernardin, the Papal Nuncio, asked Rouckes to leave Malabar or he would excommunicate him. Rouckes disobeyed and the cardinal excommunicated him. The Latins filed a suit against him to the Court of Travancore. Meantime, Rome summoned Odo to Italy. Odo arrived in Rome at the end of the spring, 1861. Pope Pius IX ordered him to call Rouckes back from Malabar immediately, and Odo submissively obeyed. Rouckes left Malabar in June of this year. He was seen off to the harbor by Metropolitan Cyril Joakim. When he arrived in Mosul,

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<sup>584</sup> These were not patriarchs but catholicoses whose dignity is lower than a patriarch. TRANS.



Odo had him absolved from the excommunication by Cardinal Amanton, the Papal Nuncio, on April 22, 1863, that is six months after leaving Malabar. But the hands of the Latins did not falter by the failure of their plan. They thought of another stratagem. This time they thought of choosing a native of Malabar and sending him to the Chaldean Patriarch (Catholicos) to ordain him a bishop and then send him back to Malabar. They chose a priest named Anton, and dispatched him with two deacons to Odo in Mosul in 1862. But when Anton arrived in Mosul, Odo refused to ordain him a bishop for fear of the pope. Anton proceeded to see the Nestorian catholicos. He was provided with a letter from Mr. Rassam the British Consul in Mosul to ordain him a bishop. The catholicos ordained Anton a bishop with the name of 'Abd Yeshu' after he and his two companions embraced Nestorianism. In 1863, 'Abd Yeshu' returned to Malabar having borrowed an amount of money from the deacon Yusuf Rassam to pay for his passage. At Malabar, 'Abd Yeshu' was advised by the natives who supported the Latins not to act freely for fear of the pope.

In 1874, Yusuf Odo dispatched the Metropolitan Iliyya (Elijah Mallous) to Malabar. But since Odo's action was without Rome's approval, the pope addressed a letter to Odo on August 27, 1874, through Cardinal Franki, president of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, threatening to impose on him canonical punishments if he did not call Mallous back from Malabar. Odo replied in a letter written in French dated February 20, 1875, defending his oppressed rights in the church of Malabar. The pope replied on September 15 refuting his allegations. Meantime, the Papal Nuncio Leonardo sent a canonical order to Mallous to leave Malabar. It caused a tremendous confusion among the Catholics of that country. Mallous disobeyed and the pope excommunicated him and delivered a proclamation against him to Malabar. The Catholics were now split into two factions, one supporting the Latin bishop; the other supporting Mallous who ordained priests and deacons. Both factions took their case to the civil courts of Travancore. After extended trial, the court confirmed Mallous's excommunication. This caused many churches, except twenty, to abandon him. His center was in the town of Trichor.

On September 1, 1876, the pope sent a proclamation to the Chaldeans explaining what had been done by Yusuf Odo. Finally, Odo submitted to the papal orders. He wrote to Mallous to leave Malabar immediately which he did. He arrived in Mosul in 1882, having stayed eight years in Malabar.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE PRINTING OF SOME CHURCH BOOKS

The first to print church books was Metropolitan Cyril Joakim. In 1859, he printed paryer books in the Malayalam by the effort of Pankal Iyyako.<sup>585</sup> At the end of this year the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal bought a lithograph press. In 1861, his father, the priest Philip, printed two hundred and fifty copies of the *Sbhimo*.<sup>586</sup> They contained only the first few lines chanted by the antiphonal choir which stands at the right side of the chancel. They were transcribed by the elegant handwriting of the Chorepiscopus Philip and printed by his effort with the permission of Metropolitan Joakim.<sup>587</sup>

The chorepiscopus was urged to embark upon this work because the Anglicans had already obtained a press. Likewise, Matta<sup>588</sup> had printed church books containing Syriac rituals which he arbitrarily distorted.<sup>589</sup>

The same reason instigated Metropolitan Joseph to buy a printing machine and letters from London. He printed in Malayalam prayer books containing intercessions to the Virgin and saints. They also contained prayers for the rest of the souls of the deceased and distributed to the members of the community. He also, collected the books distorted by Matta and set them on fire.<sup>590</sup> Moreover, Metropolitan Joseph obtained Syriac letters and published the Service Books for Passion Week, for the Fasting of Nineveh and the first half of the *Sbhimo*.<sup>591</sup>

## CHAPTER NINETEEN: THE ORIGATION OF THE MAPHRIANATE IN MALABAR

The church of Malabar appealed from time to time to the See of Antioch to dispatch a maphryono to administer it. We have seen in the previous chapters that the patriarch delegated Yalda of Khudayda (Qaraqosh), Maphryono of the East, as the first maphryono to Malabar in 1685. He was followed by Maphryono Shukr Allah who was ordained in 1748 under the specific circumstances previously related.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the condemned Matta behaved tyrannically considering himself a chief priest authorized to ordain

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<sup>585</sup> See his letter to the Chorepiscopus Philip dated June 29, 1859.

<sup>586</sup> Prayer Book for the Whole Week. TRANS.

<sup>587</sup> They are at the Library of Mar Ignatius in Omalloor-Malabar.

<sup>588</sup> The excommunicated metropolitan. TRANS.

<sup>589</sup> See his letter addressed to 'Abd al-Ahad 'Abd al-Nur in 1861.

<sup>590</sup> See the metrical ode of deacon Stephen of Azekh.

<sup>591</sup> Service Book for the Whole Week. TRANS.

clergymen arbitrarily. The aged priest Philip who noticed these developments, found it imperative to offer his own opinion to the See of Antioch about the true condition of the church of Malabar which was tossed around by billows of conflict. On September 30, 1858, he addressed a letter to the Patriarch Jacob II suggesting that he should dispatch a righteous and just maphryono to Malabar to halt the current of the anathematized Matta. He said,

“I, your servant, present to your highness the matters conducive to the steadiness of the Holy church of Malabar and the Orthodox faith. Since its inception and to this day, the saintly fathers who were dispatched by the Apostolic See did not establish full control of it. While still young, I thought that if I had lived in the time of those fathers, they would have definitely controlled it. For this reason, I kept writing to the exalted See to send saintly fathers to Malabar. In those days when Mar Cyril Joakim came to Malabar, there was no difficulty to control the churches. But he did not do so because he was not concerned about the interest of the holy church. Now, however, he is ordaining priests and deacons with no prohibition by the government because of the favorable order issued by London. Indeed, the government can no more deport the fathers whom you delegate.”

After criticizing Cyril, he says,

“Matta is now thinking of installing his cousin, the priest Tuma, a bishop. In fact, the government will not prevent Matta or Cyril from doing so. Therefore, we beseech you to dispatch a catholicos that is a maphryono, known for contentment, fairness and wisdom. After his arrival, let him ordain the priest Gurgis Konat of the church of Pampakoda, a metropolitan because of his zeal for the Orthodox faith. Both of them might, if they wish, stay in any church of their choice. They would ordain chorepiscopi and stewards for all the churches. This way, the relatives and friends of the metropolitan, the chorepiscopi and the stewards, will enthusiastically rise against Matta. His deception shall also perish at once before my death.” He goes on to say, “Please know that the wise men in your country are not wise in Malabar. How can they be wise if they do not understand the intentions of the people of Malabar, but only understand their stentorian voices? The charlatans in Malabar understand this. This is why they speak to the fathers with a tongue sweeter than honey in order to make them fall into the ditch. If a priest talks to me sweet words while concealing in his heart Matta’s deception, I could ferret this out immediately because he is a native of my country. But, if another priest addressed me with bitter words while not concealing in his heart Matta’s deception, I would still be able to understand his intentions. The reason is that his words reveal simplicity because he is

from my own country. This is not all that there is. You should know that wood cannot dent iron, but iron can blunt iron because it is of the same kind. Thus, the fathers who come from your country cannot vanquish Matta the native of Malabar. However, if the government abrogates the royal decree Matta has obtained, he will be greatly humiliated. Therefore, do write to the governor of Madras, as I have written to you a month ago. This is the experience of my old age. As for you, you should act according to your own wisdom.”

## **CHAPTER TWENTY: THE PRIEST ABRAHAM KONAT**

The ancient Konat family is marked by continuous and fruitful struggle in the field of the church of Malabar. It produced about twenty-two priests and one metropolitan known for their loyalty to the Apostolic See. They are also known for their remarkable service and support of the metropolitans of Malabar. All of them were celibate except three. History has not revealed the names of their first fourteen priests. The rest were the priests Jacob, Gurgis who was married and had daughters. Another Gurgis was the celebrated Malphono (teacher) Abraham, Yuhanna, Gurgis, the Chorepiscopus Matta the Malphono of Malabar<sup>592</sup> and his son the priest Abraham. In this chapter we shall discuss the Malphono priest Abraham who is number eighteen among these clergymen.

The priest Abraham Konat was born in 1780. He was educated in church sciences and the Syriac language. Dionysius I ordained him a priest for the church of Michael, the chief angle in Mammalssery. He served the church of Malabar with zeal and vigor. He was mentioned in the history of the church for the first time in 1811. In this year, he addressed a letter to the Apostolic See defending the community of Malabar regarding the deportation of Metropolitan Dioscorus Yuhanna of Mosul, as previously said.<sup>593</sup> Around 1815, he was appointed a teacher at the seminary at Kottayam and was called, “The teacher of the Mammalssery church.” When the Protestant (Anglican) propagandists began to spread their teachings among the Syrians, he opposed them. He defended the orthodox faith and emphasized the authority of the Apostolic See. For his activity, he was twice imprisoned. The first time he was jailed with other priests in 1826 at the prison of Hasur in Travancore following the deportation of Metropolitan Athanasius ‘Abd al-Masih of Amid. At this prison, he and the priest Philip

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<sup>592</sup> A tract of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat still in manuscript form.

<sup>593</sup> See above Book Four: Chapter Three. TRANS.

Edavazhikal composed an Ephramite (seven-syllabic) metrical ode about the condition of the church of Malabar at that time.<sup>594</sup> He was released after paying a fine of 540 Malabar dinars. In 1836, the Anglican propagandists expelled him with others from the Seminary of Kottayam. Of his pupils at that time were Dionysius III and Dionysius IV. After leaving the seminary, he built with his own money a church in Pampakoda in the name of the Apostle John. He was joined by clergymen from the churches of the north, who studied under him, and they became engaged in the transcription of books.<sup>595</sup>

Eustathius ‘Abd al-Nur, metropolitan of Jerusalem, said the following about Abraham in 1856, “Priest Abraham is the teacher of fifty churches in the north. In fact, all of their priests and deacons are his pupils. When I first visited the church of Pampakoda in the north, the said priest was then an old man.”

In 1860, priest Abraham thought of establishing a seminary. He wrote the priest Philip Edavazhikal to come and discuss the project with him.<sup>596</sup> He continued his commendable strife until his death in 1864.

Priest Abraham Konat was proficient in the Syriac language in which he wrote several letters. Cyril Joakim called him “the brilliant and judicious teacher” and “the good teacher.”<sup>597</sup>

Of the priests who studied under him were his nephew Yuhanna, who compiled a Syriac-Malayalam lexicon; Gurgis, son of his brother Matta, later was ordained a metropolitan with the name of Julius who shall be discussed later, and his nephew Abraham.

## **CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: THE IDEA OF EDUCATING THE CLERGY AFTER MATTA CAPTURED THE SEMINARY**

The church of Malabar was never in want of venerable priests known for their religious knowledge and the Syriac language. They include the priest Tuma (Thomas) around 1665,<sup>598</sup> Abraham, priest of Angamali in 1702,<sup>599</sup>

<sup>594</sup> See above Book Four: Chapter Thirteen. TRANS.

<sup>595</sup> See the letter of the priests Gurgis Konat to the priest Philip Edavazhikal dated October 13, 1860.

<sup>596</sup> See the letter of Metropolitan Cyril Joakim to the Chorepiscopus Philip dated May 12, 1860.

<sup>597</sup> See his letters dated July 3 and August 11, 1846.

<sup>598</sup> See above Book Three: Chapter One, note 1. TRANS.

<sup>599</sup> See above Book Two: Chapter Three. TRANS.

Peter in 1739,<sup>600</sup> the Chorepiscopus Gurgis in 1789, the monk Philip of Kayankulam who translated the Gospels from Syriac into Malayalam (in the first quarter of the nineteenth century),<sup>601</sup> Abraham Konat, teacher of the church of Mammalsery (1780–1864), Philip Edavazhikal (1799–1867), his son the Chorepiscopus Philip (1830–1875), and Yuhanna and Gurgis Konat.

The first who thought of establishing a seminary was the priest Abraham Konat. He addressed a letter to the Chorepiscopus Philip about the subject. But Metropolitan Cyril Joakim, who knew Abraham well, did not trust him. Still, Abraham continued to educate deacons and priests in religious sciences, the Syriac language and church chorals.

At the beginning of November, 1870, the priest Gurgis Konat and the Chorepiscopus Philip addressed a letter to Patriarch Jacob II about the dire need of the church of Malabar to educate the clergy in the Syriac language, the Scriptures and church chorals. They appealed to him to send a monk-priest for this task. Their request, however, was not fulfilled due to adverse circumstances.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: THE PRIEST PHILIP EDAVAZHICAL

Edavazhikal is the most ancient Syrian Canaanite family in Malabar. It contributed remarkable services to the church. It produced many clergymen including the priest Philip, the priest Philip the Great, brother of Luke,<sup>602</sup> his nephew the priest Philip under discussion (d.1867), and his two sons the Chorepiscopus Philip (d. 1875) and Severus Gurgis, metropolitan of the Canaanites (1910–1927), his grandson Philip (d. 1914) the proficient writer and author of *The Indian Church of St. Thomas* and his other grandson the Rev. Father the elder Luke, and his son Tuma who are still living.

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<sup>600</sup> His name was mentioned in a Syriac-Malayalam lexicon still in manuscript form as follows, “Here ends the dictionary of Syriac terms by the priest Gurgis, son of Mani and Elizabeth, and a pupil of the famous and venerable priest Peter who was concerned with divine knowledge and the promotion of the Syriac language. It was completed at 9 o’clock, Thursday March 8, 2050 of the Greeks/1739 A. D. (Pampakoda-Chaldean- Garshuni and Malayalam).”

<sup>601</sup> See above Book Three: Chapter: Thirty-Two and Book Four: Chapter Two.

<sup>602</sup> This is how their names are recorded with other deceased members of the Edavazhikal family in the liturgy book copied by Philip in 1789 at the church of Kottayam. It is now in the possession of the Edavazhikal family. It mentioned that it was copied by Philip, pupil of the venerable and orthodox Metropolitan Dionysius (d. 1808) and the Chorepiscopus Gurgis in August, 1789.

The priest Philip was born in the city of Kottayam about 1790. His father's name is Cheriyan (Zechariah) who is brother of the priest Philip the Great, already mentioned.<sup>603</sup> He had a perfect upbringing. When still young, he studied the Syriac language and mastered its grammatical principles. He then joined the Syrian priesthood of Malabar. According to the tract he penned on the Syrian church of Malabar, he was most likely ordained a deacon in 1816 by Tuma IX for the church of Kottayam.<sup>604</sup> When Tuma resigned, the church was administered by Dionysius II. We have seen earlier that deacon Philip, and other priests and deacons, accompanied him to Kollam to meet with the British Resident Munro, who had extended an invitation to them. Most likely, Philip was ordained a priest by Dionysius. However, in the fall of 1825, he received the canonical ordination from Metropolitan Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih of Amid.

Upon the deportation of 'Abd al-Masih in 1826, Philip was cast into prison in Hasur with other priests loyal to the Apostolic See. At prison, he composed, jointly with the priest Abraham Konat, an Ephramite (seven-syllabic meter) an ode about the calamities which afflicted the church. When released from prison, Philip continued his struggle in word and deed supporting the supremacy of the Apostolic See over the church of Malabar. He passed away in 1867 and was buried in the great church of Kottayam. His death was announced to the Apostolic See by his son the Chorepiscopus Philip who received condolences from Patriarch Jacob II and the notables of Mosul.

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<sup>603</sup> We read in the Service Book for the Solemnization of Weddings copied by the deacon Philip (later Chorepiscopus Philip) the following, "This book was completed in the year 2161 of the Greeks/1850 A. D., by Philip, deacon of the great church of Kottayam, son of the priest Philip and heir of the late Philip the Great, brother of my grandfather Zechariah.

<sup>604</sup> In this tract, he wrote on September 7, 1854, he said, "Bishop Tuma I, at the behest of the priest Itti Tuman, ordained priests and deacons. But since the Syrians shunned any ordination for fear of the Franks, the reader Itti the Canaanite of the Kandatil family from the great church of Kottayam, was the first priest ordained at the behest of the said priest. This family is originally from the town of Vallinat which was known by this name. I was associated with it until I moved to Kottayam. Since then, it was the custom that the bishop who comes from the Pakalomattam family should first ordain a Canaanite priest as a remembrance. I myself was the last priest ordained according to this custom by the last bishop of this family." See his memoirs dated September 7, 1854.

Priest Philip, may God be gracious to him, was well versed in church sciences and the Syriac and Malayalam languages. He was very loyal to the Apostolic See and the orthodox faith which he defended with avid fervor as evidenced by his writings in both languages. For this reason, he became pre-eminent in the eyes of the Apostolic See and the church of Malabar. Gurgis, priest of the church of Pampakoda, addressed a letter to him on October 13, 1860 saying, "My aged father. Collect sharp weapons without ceasing. When you are gone, warfare will be waged against us."

Priest Philip continued appealing to the See of Antioch to delegate metropolitans to Malabar. Despite his staunch loyalty to the Apostolic See, he is to blame for disagreeing with Metropolitan Cyril Joakim and Bishop Stephen, the delegates of the Apostolic See. This proves that he was not a capable administrator but strictly opinionated. This is why many of his ideas went awry causing the church enormous damage. Probably, the two letters of Cyril Joakim and Athanasius Stephen written in reply to his own addresses, are the best documents showing his confused acts. In the first dated March 8, 1851, Cyril criticized him for whimsically changing his mind. He had asked him not to ordain celibate priests. Also he censured the impudent Dionysius and Matthias, who had no respect for church canons by ordaining celibate priests. Cyril says despite all this, Philip asked him to ordain his celibate son, the deacon Philip a priest. Metropolitan Cyril Joakim says that if he obtained permission from the patriarch, he would ordain his son a priest. Otherwise, if Deacon Philip does not marry, he would then invest him with the monastic habit and then with the priesthood according to church canons. Cyril further blamed him for his supposition that some delegates of the Apostolic See denied the excommunication of Matthias, although the letters containing his anathema first reached him and he in turn delivered them to him (Metropolitan Cyril Joakim). Finally, Cyril advised Philip not to play both ways and to forsake personal whim.

The second letter dated September 8, 1852 is clearer than the first. It contains a vehement censure of Philip for his despotism, prevarication and intention to create sedition within the church. Bishop Stephen said that although he (Philip) endeavored to obtain a proclamation from the patriarch for the excommunication of Matthais (Matta) he, meantime, paved the way for some opponents who went to the capital Trivandrum and supported Matta at the Court of Appeals. He also incited Matta to take his case to the Court of Cassation. Indeed, sometimes he accused Matta for leaning toward the Anglicans and destroying the dogma and the churches. Other times, he declared that Matta was the metropolitan of Malabar and described him as righteous. Moreover, on the one hand he urged Metropolitan Joakim to



proclaim in the churches that the marriage of celibate priests was not permitted. On the other, he coerced Joakim to ordain some celibate priests. In addition, he provoked the wrath of Patriarch Jacob II against Metropolitan Cyril Joakim whom he accused of exclusively possessing the Patriarchal tithe.<sup>605</sup> Bishop Stephen further charged Philip with creating trouble between him, Metropolitan Cyril Joakim and the Malphono priest Abraham. Finally, he said that Philip has labeled the country (of Malabar) as the home of malice and falsehood.

### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: THE WRITINGS OF THE PRIEST PHILIP

Priest Philip had passion for the acquisition of the writings of church fathers. He contacted some fathers and men of letters in Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) to provide him with books. On May 19, 1844, he addressed a letter to some of these men saying, "I have no books but only the Two Testaments, the liturgies, the service books of baptism, the solemnization of weddings and a summer service book presented to me as a gift by Hindiyya, wife of the priest Khushaba of Ba Khudayda (Qaraqosh) which was transcribed in 1967 of the Greeks/1676 A. D., and a grammar composed by the Metropolitan Ishaq Jubayr."

Also, Philip acquired some manuscripts including *The Cause of all Causes*, and *Kthobo d-Zalge* (The Book of Rays) by Bar Hebraeus. It was presented to him as a gift by the deacon Elias Kassab of Mosul in 1865.

Priest Philip read the books of some Syrian fathers. He mastered church sciences and the Syriac language. Following is some of his writings we have come upon.

1) An ode in the Ephramite (seven-syllabic) meter composed jointly with the priest Abraham Konat in 1826 consisting of 102 lines. In this ode, the composers described the confusion of the administration of the church and the scandalous deeds and falsifications of Philexine the Anjoorian. They also contain the deportation of Metropolitan 'Abd al-Masih and arresting of the priests loyal to the Apostolic See.

2) A forty-line ode in the seven-syllabic meter addressed to a Chaldean priest named Gurgis on January 11, 1835. Philip asked him the reason the

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<sup>605</sup> The most outrageous denigration of Cyril Joakim is Philip's letter dated June 7, 1864 in the handwriting of his son the Chorepiscopus, addressed to the patriarch. In it, he accused Cyril of simony as Matta has done.

Creed they used does not include the death of the Lord Jesus but only states that, “He suffered, was buried and resurrected.”

3) A Sarugite, (twelve-syllabic meter) ode refuting the Indian Syrians who follow the Church of Rome.

4) An affectionate metrical letter addressed to Timothy Abraham, metropolitan of Edessa on April 15, 1845, containing some of his affairs.

5) Some *madrashe* (hymns) for the deceased.

6) A short tract in ten pages on the history of the church of Malabar since the time of St. Thomas until 1816. It was completed on May 28, 1854. Philip mentioned that he wrote it in brevity derived from a lengthy original in Malayalam. It included the Protestants’ (Anglicans) control of the seminary and the coming to Malabar of the Antiochian fathers. However, he made a mistake saying that Metropolitan Yuhanna of Ba Khudayda ordained the Anjoorian (Philoxenus) in 1772. But he corrected this mistake in another place.

7) A questionnaire in twenty pages about the church of Malabar, the conduct of its people which we found unworthy of recording.

Philip wrote a defense of issues concerning the dogma and church rituals in refutation of the Anglicans. They will follow in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: THE DEFENSE OF PRIEST PHILIP OF MATTERS CONCERNING THE DOGMA AND RITE AGAINST THE PROTESTANTS (ANGLICANS)**

Following is Priest Philip’s defense in the form of questions and answers.

Q. Why do you commemorate the dead?

A. Read Psalm 112: 6 “A righteous man will be remembered forever,” meaning as long as the world stands. In Proverbs 10: 7 “The memory of the righteous will be a blessing.” In Matthew 26: 13 “Wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” Psalm 109: 15 “May their sins always remain before the Lord, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth,” and Tobit : Chapter 8.

Q. Why do you recite the names of the deceased?

A. See Exodus 32: 33 “The Lord replied to Moses, whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book,” Philippians 4: 3 “whose names are in the book of life,” Daniel 12: 1 “But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered,” Psalms 29: 28 “May they be blotted out of the book of life,” Revelation 3: 5 “He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life,” and Revelation 13:8 “all whose names have

not been written in the book of life belonging to the lamb that was slain from the creation of the world,” and Revelation 20: 12 “Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”

Q. Why do you celebrate the Mass (Holy Eucharist) for the dead?

A. See 1 Corinthians 15: 29 “Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? 1 John 5: 16 “If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life.” In 2 Maccabees 12: 43 is written that the mighty Judah “took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way in as much as he had the resurrection of the dead in view.” (See also Exodus 20: 5 and 34: 7.) In 2 Kings 14: 6 is written “Yet he did not put the sons of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the Lord commanded: “Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins,” and Nehemiah 9: 2 “Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers.”

Q. Why do you condemn the heretics and Nestorius?

A. See Psalm 55: 15 “Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave (Sheol), for evil finds lodging among them,” Psalm 59: 13 “Consume them in wrath, consume them till they are no more, then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob,” Psalm 118: 10 “All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I cut them off,” 1 Corinthians 16: 22 “If anyone does not love the Lord—a curse be on him,” Proverbs 17: 5 “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter,” Proverbs 17: 5 “Whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished,” and Deuteronomy 27: 16 “Cursed is the man who dishonors his father and his mother. Then all the people shall say, Amen.”

Q. Why do you greet the altar while it does not hear? Nay, you even worship it?

A. Check Psalm 68: 15–16 “Rugged are the mountains of Bashan, Why gaze in envy, O rugged mountains,” Psalm 96: 9 “Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness,” and Psalm 147: 13 “Extol the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise your God, O Zion.”

Q. Why do you bow down to the wood of the cross?

A. See Psalm 96: 9 “Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness,” which also includes the cross. In Psalm 99: 9 we read, “Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his mountain, for the Lord our God is holy,” Galatians 6: 14 “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified and I to the world,” and Philippians 3: 18 “For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.”

Q. Why do you pray to God saying “For the sake of your saints?”

A. Check 1 Kings 1: 12 “Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it<sup>606</sup> during your lifetime I will tear it out of the hand of your son,” 2 Kings 19: 24 “I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.”

Q. Why do you build churches in the name of the Mother of God and the saints?

A. See 1 Kings 18: 31 “Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, “Your name shall be Israel.” This means that Elijah placed the foundation of the altar in the name of the twelve tribes of Israel. In like manner, the Christians built churches in the names of the Mother of God and the saints in Syria, Rome and England before and after the Council of Nicaea. They did this to commemorate and honor them. They never built a church in the name of Cain, Ham and Judas the Iscariot.”

Q. Why do you supplicate God saying by the prayer of the Mother of God and saints?”

A. When they were in the body, the saints appealed to God on behalf of everyone. Their supplications before God never ceased. Now that they are out of the body, they supplicate God even more on behalf of all people as our Lord himself supplicates for us before the Father. If Dives (the rich man) in hell could not see the face of God, yet he appealed to Abraham on behalf of his brothers as written in Luke 16: 27. How much more the saints who see the face of God according to the Lord who says to them, “And lo I shall be with you until the end of time,” Matthew 28: 20, do pray for all the people? If someone objects claiming that this is only a mere saying, we will reply that there is no saying about a horse’s horn because it is not real. But there is one about the elephant’s tusk because it is real. If someone claims that there was no mediator between God the Father and man but Jesus Christ, why, then, did Paul ask for mediation saying in Romans 15: 30, “I

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<sup>606</sup> Meaning tear up the kingdom. TRANS.

urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me?" If there is a need for a corporeal mediator, why, then, should there not be a need for a spiritual one (that is by the soul alone)? If it is fitting for a man in the body to be a mediator to God, isn't it more fitting if he, without the body, becomes a mediator to God? See 1 Timothy 2: 1 "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone."

Q. Do deceased saints accept the requests of people? And do they take it up to God?

A. See Revelation 5: 8 "And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints," and Revelation 8: 4 "The smoke of the incense together with the prayers of the saints went up before God from the angel's hand," Luke 15: 10 "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents," Jeremiah 15: 1 "Then the Lord said to me: 'Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people,'" and Job 1: 6 "One day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord." Obviously, the sons of God (Elohim) are the saints who had slept. They are called the sons of God.

Q. Why do you honor the Mother of God (Mary) more than all the saints?

A. The Virgin (Mary), Mother of God, is the pride of all Christians. She is the throne of God, the mother of the creator, the blessed among women and full of grace more than the saints. When at the wedding at Cana wine was totally consumed, she requested our Lord, whom she watched committing miracles since childhood, and he said to her, in John 2:4 "Woman, what have I to do with you?" He said this because the hour he decided to do the miracle has not yet come. It was then that his mother appealed to him continuously and he changed the water into wine. Thus, we honor Mary, Mother of God, more than all the saints. But, we kneel down before the saints as a matter of respect and decorum as John taught us once and Cornelius twice. (See Revelation 19: 10, 22: 18 and Acts 10: 26). We know that they did not go to hell because of their prostration. On the contrary, we empathize the kneeling down before the angels and the saints. Indeed, John knelt down twice before the angel. For whenever we worship Christ, the perfect God and Man, there is no doubt that we worship him in his humanity too. Doing so, we never think that we are committing sin. This is the same when we bow down to our patriarchs and metropolitans

and kiss their hands. If Samuel, who was dead, did not prevent Saul, who was alive, from bowing down to him (Samuel 2: 28: 14), how much more, then, we are in need of prostrating before the saints who are alive with God?

Q. If Reuben was cursed according to Deuteronomy 27: 20 “cursed is the man who sleeps with his father’s wife,” and Reuben did sleep with his father’s wife according to Genesis 35: 21 “While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father’s concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it,” why did Moses inscribe his name on the stone? (See Deuteronomy 27:8, Genesis 35: 22, and 45: 3; Leviticus 18: 8; Job 5: 1 and 1 Corinthians 5: 1 and 5).

A. Before Moses inscribed the names of the Twelve tribes of Israel on the stone, he offered a sacrifice for the sins of Reuben according to Exodus 28: 9–10.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: DIONYSIUS JOSEPH RESISTS MATTA’S ACTIONS

The first thing Metropolitan Dionysius V Joseph did after his ordination is to petition the prime minister of Travancore to endorse him as a legitimate metropolitan because he was canonically ordained by the patriarch. He also asked him to annul the proclamation issued in favor of Athanasius Matta. On his part, Matta addressed a letter to the prime minister, through the British Resident, saying that Dionysius’s petition should be accompanied by the Residents’ recommendation. This was impossible since the Resident was under the influence of the missionaries who supported Matta. Therefore, at the behest of the Resident, the prime minister instructed Dionysius Joseph to take the case to the courts. He observed that “if the case of one church be taken to court and decided, the principle involved would be settled and would apply to all similar cases.”<sup>607</sup> Dionysius appealed the prime minister’s decision to the Madras government which confirmed it. Thereupon, Dionysius took the case of one church to the civil courts in Travancore. The High Court issued the following decision, “No metropolitan claiming to be as such can be recognized by the courts unless he has been also recognized by the state. We must act on the principle that Mar Athanasius (Matta) is lawful as well as a metropolitan until his opponents obtain the permission and

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<sup>607</sup> The author has taken this statement and all that was said above from E. M. Philip, *The Indian church of St. Thomas*, 204–205. TRANS.

sanction of the government of Travancore to support their case.”<sup>608</sup> Thus, both the government and the court closed their doors to Dionysius<sup>609</sup> and deprived him the freedom enjoyed by all religions in India according to the laws of the British government. The influence which Matta had with the British Resident and the Anglican missionaries was the cause of Dionysius’s troubles.<sup>610</sup>

In the meantime, in order to make his position more secure, Athanasius Matta appealed in 1869 to the Resident for the payment of the trust funds which were deposited at the Resident’s treasury in the name of the Syrian church of Malabar and its accumulated interest.<sup>611</sup> The Malabar writer, Philip, said that the fund now amounted to 35, 000 rupees. Of this, the amount 6,000 rupees were adjudged for the Syrians by the Arbitrators in 1840 when the properties were divided between them and the Anglicans. At that time, however, Dionysius IV refused to cash the amount because it was meager. The rest of the amount and its interest had been deposited by Dionysius I in 1808.<sup>612</sup>

Dionysius Joseph and several parishes petitioned the government not to pay Matta the invested fund, but to no avail. Meantime, a meeting was held in the house of Rev. Henry Baker, Jr., the leading member of the Protestant propagandists<sup>613</sup> in Travancore. It was attended by Mr. Ballard, then the Resident, who conducted nominal investigation of the rights of the ex-communicated Matta. The Resident issued a favorable decision of Matta to the Madras government. The Syrians were outraged.<sup>614</sup> On December 26, 1869, Metropolitan Cyril Joakim wrote from Tirula to the Chorepiscopus Philip saying that, “reports reached us from Kottayam that the seminary funds will be paid to Matta Pallakonon. But I have no idea how true this is.” At the end of 1870, the Madras government ruled that the funds should be paid to Matta based on the Resident’s report. But it overlooked the protest

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<sup>608</sup> Philip, 205, quoting Judgment of the Travancore High Court dated August 14, 1873, in A. S. No 154 of 1044 M. E. TRANS.

<sup>609</sup> Philip, 205. TRANS.

<sup>610</sup> Philip, 205. TRANS.

<sup>611</sup> E. M. Philip, 205–206. TRANS.

<sup>612</sup> Evidently, the author has copied E. M. Philip, but reversed the order of his statements. See Philip, 205–206. TRANS.

<sup>613</sup> The Church Missionary Society (C. M. S.). TRANS.

<sup>614</sup> Philip, 206.

of Dionysius and a great number of Syrians against it. The rule of the Madras government was a sheer violation of the law.<sup>615</sup>

The Syrian Church of Malabar detested the destructive deeds of Matta which violated religious principles and church canons. It reported the case to the Apostolic See. On October 21, 1870, Dionysius Joseph addressed a letter from St. John church in Pampakoda, to Patriarch Jacob II saying, “Matta is spreading his heresy claiming that he is a patriarch and uses red ink for his seal. He has already ordained two persons as bishops.” Joseph attached a copy of Matta’s letters.

On September 4, 1871, the priest Gurgis addressed a letter from the church Pampakoda to Chorepiscopus Philip informing him that the letter of the excommunicated Matta, sealed with red<sup>616</sup> and addressed to the entire churches, was received by the churches. To it was attached the seminary’s account. Out of ignorance, however, many churches stamped it with their seals according to Matta’s instructions and sent it back to him. Others rejected it.

In 1873, during Lent, Dionysius Joseph addressed a reply to the letter of Patriarch Peter IV, saying that “You have asked me whether the excommunicated Matta has ordained bishops. My answer is that he has ordained two men as so-called bishops: one with the name of Cyril Joseph and the other with the name of Athanasius Tuma. They are more evil than him because since they were in their mothers’ wombs they were reared in the Protestant belief.”

## **Book Six: The Church of Malabar in the Time of Patriarch Butrus (Peter)**

### **CHAPTER ONE: ECHO OF THE ORDINATION OF PATRIARCH PETER IV IN MALABAR**

On February 12, 1871, Patriarch Jacob II of blessed memory passed away. His death was telegraphically announced by the Mardin Council to Metropolitan Cyril Joakim and Metropolitan Joseph.

On June 4, 1872, Peter IV ascended the Patriarchal Throne of Antioch in a remarkable ceremony attended by crowds of Syrians from all par-

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<sup>615</sup> Philip, 206.

<sup>616</sup> Red seal was the exclusive privilege of the patriarch. TRANS.



ishes.<sup>617</sup> The news of this joyful occasion was telegraphed to the churches of Malabar. The new patriarch addressed to this church three proclamations through the Mosul delegation which attended the ordination ceremony. The Metropolitan of Mosul and some notables wrote to their friends in Malabar describing that splendid ceremony. They expressed joy for the piety and zeal of the new Father, the adherence of parishioners to him, and his great endeavor to rebuild the Monastery of the Patriarchal Seat (Za'faran Monastery) which was mostly in ruins.

At Malabar, Metropolitan Joseph had the patriarch's proclamations read at the Church of St. Peter (The Zion Monastery) in a magnificent celebration on the New Year festival, 1873.

The parishioners received blessing by the Patriarchal Seal. They proclaimed Patriarch Peter as the successor of St. Peter the Apostle with a solemn submission and shouts of joy mingled with the sounds of tambourines, bells and music. A three hundred gun salute was fired according to their custom. They were sure that the new patriarch would save them from the yoke of the excommunicated Matta, the second pharaoh.<sup>618</sup>

The patriarchal proclamations were designated with the names of Metropolitans Joakim and Joseph. This abundantly grieved Matta since they demonstrated to the rulers and others that the Apostolic See did not recognize him as legitimate. Otherwise, the patriarch would have delivered his proclamations through him.

## CHAPTER TWO: MATTA'S DEVASTATING FAILURE

The Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal exerted remarkable effort in opposing the excommunicated Matta by his continuous correspondence with the Anglican bishops and vicars in England. He exposed Matta's heresy and anathema imposed on him by the Patriarchs Elias II and Jacob II, and the support he received from the Anglican vicars in Malabar. Many Anglican clergymen were convinced by Philip's letters. They published in the newspapers Matta's excommunications. They said, "Truly, Matta is excommunicated by the Patriarch of Antioch. We have read the letters of the Patriarchs Elias and Jacob of his excommunication delivered by the Syrian Chorepiscopus."

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<sup>617</sup> E. M. Philip erroneously refers to him as Patriarch III. See Philip, 207–208. TRANS.

<sup>618</sup> See the letter of Metropolitan Joseph to Patriarch Peter IV, and the letters of the patriarch and the metropolitan of Mosul, Jirjis Sarsam and Anton 'Abd al-Nur, addressed to the Chorepiscopus Philip.

copus Philip. The Patriarch of Antioch was the head of the Church of Malabar since the Council of Nicaea. We, the fair sons of England, should not persecute the ancient Syrians of Malabar, as did the Frankish Portuguese. We should renounce the excommunicated metropolitan who is ousted by the Patriarch of Antioch and accept the metropolitan blessed by the Patriarch. We have learned this from the letters of the Patriarch of Antioch sent to us by the Chorepiscopus Philip stamped with the Patriarch seal on which appears his portrait and name in Syriac. It is surrounded by twelve bishops in accordance with his apostolic authority.” They abundantly praised the patriarch. In fact, the Archbishop of Canterbury addressed a letter to the Bishop of Madras asking him to cease supporting Matta. In addition, many men in power opposed Matta. They asked him to present a document from the patriarch showing that he is blessed.<sup>619</sup> Indeed, many Anglican clergymen renounced Matta when they discovered that he was a drunkard, corrupt and unbeliever. Some English, pagans and Latins, wrote in the British press of his objectionable conduct.<sup>620</sup> Also, Metropolitan Joseph and Chorepiscopus Philip addressed a letter to Patriarch Peter and to Metropolitan Behnam Samarchi of Mosul requesting that no one should communicate with Matta lest he becomes emboldened by the communication and control the entire community.

Patriarch Peter received an amicable letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury in May, 1873, inquiring about his own affairs and the affairs of (the Syrians) in India. He inquired whether Matta was really excommunicated by his predecessor patriarchs, whether, at present, he was adhering to the dogma of the Syrian church under his authority. They also asked who the head of the churches and the monasteries is, who controls the tithes, and who assists him and operates the churches according to his orders. Patriarch Peter replied explaining how Matta deceived the Patriarch (Elias II) by forging letters in the name of the community, and that he celebrated the Eucharist while he was not ordained even as a priest. He went on to say that when Matta began to alter the principles of the faith and rituals, cast priests into prison, and control the churches by force, Patriarch Elias II excommunicated him after receiving letters against him from the Malabar community. The patriarch dispatched Metropolitan Cyril Joakim as a Met-

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<sup>619</sup> See the letter of the Chorepiscopus Philip to Patriarch Peter IV dated May 25, 1873.

<sup>620</sup> See the letter of Metropolitan Dionysius Joseph to Behnam Samarchi, metropolitan of Mosul dated April 10, 1873.

ropolitan of India and addressed letters accordingly to the kings (rajas). Still, some rulers supported Matta against Cyril. Patriarch Jacob II confirmed Matta's excommunication after receiving many letters against him with the result that he had no communion with the Syrian Church. Finally, the patriarch asked the Archbishop to address letters to the kings (rajas) and rulers of Malabar not to assist Matta but oust him from the Syrian churches and deliver them and their revenues to Dionysius Joseph.<sup>621</sup>

The Syrian community detached itself from Matta who had in his position only the building of the churches he had controlled with the help of the English governors. He was abjectly humiliated and dejected. He tried to seek a means to deceive the patriarch hoping to obtain a proclamation to bless him and save him from his fall. He turned to Maqdisi Khadduri Bunni al-Tawil, a notable Syrian of Mosul, hoping that through him he may achieve his goal. Meantime, he addressed a letter to the patriarch on May 1, 1873 saying that he kisses his immaculate hands and feet. He expressed deep sorrow because the patriarch delivered his proclamations through the Metropolitans Joakim and Joseph and to the community for the occasion of ascending the Patriarchal Throne. He complains that the patriarch has overlooked him as if he was alien to the church. But, he expresses joy for the renovation of the Za'faran Monastery by the patriarch saying that the two Metropolitans, Joakim and Joseph, collected money, jewels and gold and silver vessels for the project, and that he is also willing to partake in the same project. He said he will send the collection with two trustworthy men. He cherishes the hope that peace will prevail in his time that its light might shine again because of his prudent administration, wisdom and piety. Matta went on to tell the patriarch that he seems to believe the reports that come out of Malabar. But, he will learn the truth when he had fathomed the true situation. He will be informed of the truth by the Maqdisi Khadduri who spent eleven months in Malabar. He visited many churches and talked to many priests, deacons, lawyers, stewards, teachers and the rest of the community.

Momentarily, Matta addressed a letter to the metropolitan of Mosul sealed with red ink saying, "The conflict will never disappear from Malabar, neither peace will prevail as long as the leaders of Malabar are self-righteous, having no humility and are overwhelmed by arrogance."

At the same time, he wrote to some notables of Mosul saying, "Don't believe these black Indian liars. As for me, my neck is under the authority

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<sup>621</sup> See the letter of Patriarch Peter IV dated August 25, 1873.

of the Apostolic See and it is the patriarch's footstool." Thus, Matta was humiliated and realized that his fall was at hand. But the Syrian notables of Mosul paid no attention to him or responded to his entreaties. They wrote to the patriarch to act according to the requests of Metropolitan Joseph and the Chorepiscopus Philip. In his reply to the Metropolitan Joseph dated June 28, 1873, the Metropolitan of Mosul, Dionysius Behnam Samarchi, said, "The evil deeds of Matta have been exposed to everyone. How are we expected to listen to him?"

### **CHAPTER THREE: PATRIARCH PETER CONFIRMS MATTA'S EXCOMMUNICATION**

On October 21, 1870, Metropolitan Joseph addressed a letter from the Church of St. John in Pampakoda, to Patriarch Jacob II. To it was attached a petition of the Syrian churches and a copy of an English magazine. They were carried by the deacon Jacob of Amid and his son Yuhanna who were about to leave Malabar. In this letter, Joseph informed the patriarch of the trouble he received from the excommunicated Matta and asked him to save the church from him. The immediate assistance he requested from the Apostolic See was eight letters reexcommunicating Matta. One of them was a general letter addressed to the entire churches; the rest were addressed to Metropolitan Joseph and to Malphono Yuhanna Konat, priest of the Pampakoda church, the Chorepiscopus Philip and to the notables Epiora, David Panakal (Kollamkulam), Peter Pallal (Curieni), Konikora Kallarkal and Kunikoro Maveparambil. The reason these letters were addressed to these dignitaries is that the rulers have no consideration for former letters of excommunicating Matta because they are old. They demand new ones signed and confirmed by the British Council.

Patriarch Jacob II, however, passed away on February 12, 1871 before responding to the appeal of the Malabar community. When Peter IV succeeded him to the Patriarchal Throne on June 4, 1782, the Malabar community addressed a letter to him. In this letter dated May 25, 1873, the Chorepiscopus Philip said, "We shall convene a council with Metropolitan Joseph and discuss the affairs of the church. We shall then write to your holiness about what is necessary to be done in the appropriate time. Do not neglect this vast diocese in which you have countless sons. If this diocese is freed from Matta's heresy, you will then be able to utilize it as a king."

Patriarch Peter IV received this letter while he was in Constantinople. He addressed five letters from that city: one to Dionysius Joseph and the rest to the British Resident, the rajas and rulers of Malabar. He confirmed

the excommunication of Matta and those who invested him illegally with the episcopate.<sup>622</sup>

On September 24, 1873, Chorepiscopus Philip addressed a letter to the patriarch about the downfall of the church of Malabar. He complained about lax metropolitans who have no zeal for the faith or care for the flock of Christ. He explained Matta's destructive deeds and how he disturbed the church's peace. He blamed Metropolitan Cyril Joakim saying that, "Since he set foot in India he was only concerned with collecting silver (money). He ignored the honor of the one who delegated him<sup>623</sup> and the honorable faith. Thus, he became the cause of the downfall of the Malabar church. When excommunicated Matta realized his laxity he was emboldened. He obtained royal decrees from the rajas of Travancore and Cochin authorizing him to subdue the churches by force and expel the parishioners. Likewise, Philip portrays Metropolitan Joseph as a lover of silver. He censures him for negligence, cowardice and hypocrisy. Finally, Chorepiscopus Philip beseeches the patriarch to exert utmost effort in order to rescue the church of Malabar from the claws of the rapacious wolf, Matta. He attached to his letter copies of the unfair verdicts issued by the Indian rulers against the Syrian church supporting their friend the excommunicated Matta.

In January, 1874, Patriarch Peter received this letter while he was in Constantinople. On February 25, he replied saying, "Your metropolitans do not keep their promises at their ordination. Before they are ordained, they show humility and anxiousness to serve, falsely of course. But when they get hold of the pastoral staff, they put on the raiment of vanity because the love of money blinds their eyes. In the time of Patriarch Elias, Matthais (Matta) came to the patriarch carrying letters asking to ordain him a metropolitan. When the Syrian notables of Mosul saw his humility they were deceived by him not knowing that he was a wolf in a lamb's skin. This is how he behaved before the patriarch who, impressed, asked him whether all the Syrians of Malabar behave like him. The patriarch honored him and ordained him a metropolitan. But as soon as he got hold of the pastoral staff, he began to spew out venom against the Syrians of Malabar. He disturbed the peace of the church and exchanged the faith with heresy. His mind was enthralled by the love of money. Like Judas, he was far away from the

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<sup>622</sup> See the letter of Patriarch Peter IV dated August 25, 1873, and the letter of the Chorepiscopus Philip to the Metropolitan of Mosul, Behnam Samarchi, dated September 24, 1873.

<sup>623</sup> The patriarch. TRANS.

Apostleship. The patriarch (Elias II) excommunicated him and ordained the monk Joakim as a metropolitan for India. We thought that Joakim would save the Syrian community from the claws of this rapacious wolf, but he behaved as you have described him. As a matter of duty, shouldn't he have sailed to London to meet Her Majesty the Queen (Victoria) and present to her copies of the unjust verdicts which violate the laws of the kingdom of England which you have provided us with? Shouldn't he have obtained an order from the queen to save the Syrian community from the claws of this rapacious wolf? But when you saw that no benefit was expected from him, you selected Metropolitan Joseph and dispatched him to Patriarch Jacob provided with excellent recommendations and letters. He fulfilled your desire. However, Joseph also appeared as you have said. He should have also journeyed to London and presented to the queen the copies of the said unjust verdicts. In fact, when we hear these reports about our church fathers, we grieve tremendously. Now if we ordain a metropolitan from our own community and send him to you, you will brand him as a thief and robber. And if you choose one from your community to become a metropolitan, he will turn an enemy of the faith, even a heretic like Matthias (Matta). What shall we do then? After all, angles do not become metropolitans and leaders of this world?"

The patriarch addressed a general letter to all the churches of Malabar comforting the believers. Also, he addressed a letter to Metropolitan Joseph.<sup>624</sup>

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: PATRIARCH PETER IN LONDON**

Patriarch Peter grieved tremendously for the calamity which afflicted the church of Malabar. After discussing it with the bishops of the Apostolic See, he decided to journey to London to defend the suppressed rights of the church. He addressed a letter to the Chorepiscopus Philip informing him that, upon accomplishing his task in Constantinople he, God willing, will journey to London to visit the Queen (Victoria) to dispose of the interests of the church of Malabar. He advised him to have his people address a petition (to London) signed by many notables explaining the problems of their community and its deplorable condition. After that, God will do what he wills.<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> See his letter dated February 25, 1874.

<sup>625</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated February 25, 1874.

On August 14, 1874, the patriarch sailed from Constantinople accompanied by Gregorius 'Abd Allah, metropolitan of Jerusalem, and reached London on August 24. He addressed a letter to Metropolitan Joseph informing him of his arrival in London. Twenty days later, he received order from the queen according to the English custom granting him an audience. Upon receiving the queen's order, he submitted a petition to Lord Salisbury, Minister of Indian Affairs, explaining the reasons for the excommunication of Matta. He complained against the rulers of Travancore, Cochin and Madras and against the British Resident and Matta who have oppressed the Syrian community. He attached it with the royal decree which exonerated Matta. The patriarch also informed the Archbishop of Canterbury of the actions of the bishops of Madras and Calcutta against the church of Malabar.<sup>626</sup> Meantime, Metropolitan Joseph remitted to the patriarch by telegraph a thousand rupees. Upon receiving it, the patriarch asked Joseph to telegraph another amount. He also addressed a letter in Syriac to the raja of Travancore dated December 3, 1874. He delivered it to Metropolitan Joseph, asking him to translate it into Malayalam and present it to the raja. In it he said,

"We learned from the copy of the royal decree you provided the excommunicate Matta that he has approached you deceitfully. He claimed that he was a metropolitan ordained by the Patriarch of Antioch for all the Syrian churches in India. He also said that Metropolitan Cyril (Joakim) and Bishop Stephen were foreigners who came to India without the authority of the patriarch. Their aim was to create trouble and sedition among the churches. You believed him without proper investigation and empowered him to control our churches. He expelled our priests and congregations from the churches which they have possessed for a thousand years. Furthermore, he pillaged the churches and their revenues and abolished their rituals and canons. He also had the audacity to abrogate the order of the Patriarch of Antioch and rebel against him. For this reason, the patriarch excommunicated him. He (Matta) is now excommunicated by three patriarchs. He is divested from the dignity of the episcopate in the Syrian community. Indeed, who rebels against his leader has no spiritual or physical communion with his Lord. Now, if one of your subordinates rebelled against you, would you give him the authority to rule over your subjects or rather expel him for his treachery? The royal decree you provided this traitor in violation of the law, empowering him to rule over the poor and the

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<sup>626</sup> See MSS in the possession of Edavazhikal family.

hapless, has caused rift and conflict within the dioceses. We know that your majesty does not countenance such action. Therefore, we beseech you to rescind the decree and expel him (Matta) from our community and deliver the churches to Metropolitan Dionysius Joseph because he is loyal and obedient to our order. Furthermore, if Matta is truly a Syrian and obeys our orders, let him endeavor to meet with us. If, however, he is a follower of an adverse faith, he has no communion with our people. This, in fact, is the law of all kingdoms. It dictates that churches should be the possession of their ancient owners. If anyone secedes from them, let him build other churches according to his own faith. In fact, the churches in Travancore belong to our Syrian community. We, therefore, request your highness to stop the rift and controversy in the (Syrian) dioceses in your exalted kingdom. This way, our people will enjoy safety, love and joy which are your majesty's worthwhile."

On January 12, 1875, the patriarch received a reply from Lord Salisbury saying, "We have addressed a letter attached with yours to the governor of Madras in order to dispose everything with justice. The disputes which happened in India should be settled in India itself." The patriarch delivered the letter to Dionysius Joseph and ordered him to investigate the matter with the governor of Madras and telegraph him the result. Meantime, the patriarch rejected the idea that the case should be settled in India. He addressed a second letter to Lord Salisbury to which he attached the letters and petitions of the church of Malabar.

In the meantime, Metropolitan Joseph remitted to the patriarch by telegraphs two thousand rupees. Upon receiving the amount the patriarch informed the metropolitan about the matters concerning the church. He also addressed another letter in English to the raja of Travancore, through Metropolitan Joseph, telling him to deliver it to the raja if he found it appropriate. Otherwise he should not deliver it.<sup>627</sup>

In mid-February, the patriarch addressed a letter about the same to the Chorepiscopus Philip in reply to his letter. He informed him that some Syrians of Malabar had sent him a letter in English together with the letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury, without an envelope, saying that they belong to his own people. They have collected 400 dinars and entrusted them to Metropolitan Joseph. The metropolitan made portraits of Christ and the Virgin and asked them to offer them due honor. They went on to say that Matthias (Matta) is a good man but they do not like him because he teaches

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<sup>627</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated January 14, 1875.



the faith of the English (the Church of England). The patriarch understood from this letter that it was written by Matta who intended to show the Archbishop of Canterbury that he was a Protestant.<sup>628</sup>

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, ILLNESS AND DEATH OF METROPOLITAN CYRIL JOAKIM

Since he arrived in Malabar, Metropolitan Cyril Joakim never slackened working for the interest of the Apostolic See despite the difficulties he faced. He opposed heresies. He resisted the Protestants (Anglicans), and Catholics. Likewise, he opposed the excommunicated Matta and some clerics and leading notables of the community. He built churches, consecrated altars, ordained priests and deacons and printed church prayer books. He toured many churches in that vast diocese counseling and teaching the people through homilies and correspondence. He won many people to the church fold.

On December 9, 1851, he addressed a reply to the letter of Chorepiscopus Philip saying that a heathen young woman came from the south. She was the daughter of Nampodarri of Kayankulam (the highest stratum of heathens) who has believed in Christ and was baptized by a priest. He solemnized her wedding to a young man who was in her company. Also, he baptized another heathen young man whose relatives created a great deal of commotion. The metropolitan appealed to the court which immediately dispatched a police force and arrested them.

Metropolitan Joakim also addressed a letter to the Chorepiscopus Philip on February 8, 1854. He said that he has laid the foundation stone of a new church in Porokulam on the tract of land which belongs to the company about half an hour distant from the marketplace of Kunnankulam. It was attended by a great crowd of worshipers from Kunnankulam and the neighboring villages. He constructed this church with his own money and by the permission of the governor of Calicut as mentioned in his letter dated June 23, 1855.<sup>629</sup> It was also his desire to set a large font in Kallissery for baptizing the outcast heathens. He addressed a letter to the Chorepiscopus Philip dated January 8, 1856, saying, "There is a baptismal font on the

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<sup>628</sup> For an account of Patriarch Peter's visit to London, and by Patriarch Abd Alla II, and their contacts with the English government and the Archbishops of Canterbury, see William Henry Taylor, *Antioch and Canterbury: The Syrian Orthodox Church and the Church of England 1874–1828* (Gorgias Press, 2005). TRANS.

<sup>629</sup> This letter is at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

bank of the Kallissery river. So, there is no need for another one to be set somewhere else.” On January 21, he received a reply from Philip. Three days later, he addressed a letter to Philip from the Koropompadi church saying that, God willing, he will proceed to that place without delay.

Metropolitan Joakim, not only looked after the community of Malabar, but also gathered its scattered flock. On September 28, 1858, he addressed a letter from the church of Parur in the south to the Chorepiscopus Philip saying that he was ready to journey to Bengal. He has already left Cochin a day earlier. Today, he celebrated the Eucharist in Parur. This evening he will sail to the port of Alleppy and then leaves for Bengal. When he returns from his apostolic tour, he will have prayer books printed in Malayalam for the benefit of the believers. On June 29, 1859, he wrote to the Chorepiscopus that he has written to Panakal Iyyako in Kunnankulam to print prayer books. Panakal did and sold them to the parishioners. If they demanded more copies he would then print a greater quantity of these books.

On November 10, 1859, Joakim addressed a letter to the Chorepiscopus from Tirula saying “I will be back soon. I have laid the foundation stone of a new church in Metrai in the name of Mar Ignatius III, the Fiery, patriarch of Antioch. The parishioners insisted that I should stay until Sunday and I agreed. After Sunday I will return to Cochin.”

Moreover, he built a church in Kallissery after the name of Mar Awgen specifically for the use of the fathers delegated by the See of Antioch. He had a tablet containing this information in Syriac laid in the wall of the church. In his letter dated July 7, 1863, he said that he baptized 2736 heathens, and built twenty-eight new churches up to that date.<sup>630</sup>

Metropolitan Joakim won back to the church a great number of Syrians and some churches deceived by Matta. Of these were the churches of Kosenchery and Ayrur. He ordained for them two priests: Zechariah of Kaidankana and Gurgis of Mavelil. From Tirula, he delivered to them a proclamation in Malayalam dated August 26, 1862. In it, he instructed the clergy and the congregation to observe the five fastings other than those on Wednesdays and Fridays, as was written in the *Book of Hodooyo (Nomocanon)*. He further instructed them to pray seven times a day. The laborers, however, should pray only twice a day. Furthermore, they should celebrate the Eucharist for the rest of the souls of the deceased especially on the third, ninth, fifteenth and thirtieth days and hold banquets (for the poor) on them. They should receive the communion in both the Body and the Blood

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<sup>630</sup> This letter is at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

simultaneously. They should preserve some of the elements in a tabernacle at the altar to be administered to the sick when necessary. They should recite the *Sbhimo* (Service Book for the Whole Week). As for the believers who do not know Syriac, they should use the prayer book translated into Malayalam. Meantime, he admonishes them not to use the prayer book published in Malayalam by the rebel Matta which is devoid of the prayers offered to the Virgin and the saints. He supports their intercessions by Biblical testimonies. He commands them to celebrate their festivals, light fire on Christmas, and bless the water on Epiphany. He also commands them to celebrate Palm Sunday with branches of olive and palm leaves, celebrate the worship of the cross and its burial on Good Friday. They should also bless water and sprinkle the worshipers with it on Pentecost. They should anoint the baptized with the Holy Chrism which he provided to the newly ordained priests.<sup>631</sup>

Joakim did not stop at this point but also worked for the prosperity of the Syrian community. He appealed to the government to open a market for buying and selling in the village of Kallissery, and it did.<sup>632</sup>

When news about the remarkable deeds of Metropolitan Joakim reached Mosul, the Chorepiscopus Yalda and the deacons Behnam 'Abd al-Nur and his brother, 'Abd al-Ahad and the Deacon Butrus Kassab, addressed to him a letter dated February 1, 1862. They said that they became overjoyed upon hearing from strangers about his commendable struggle in Malabar. On July 20 of the same year, Cyril Denha, bishop of St. Matthew's Monastery, addressed to the Chorepiscopus Philip a metrical letter in the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter praising Metropolitan Joakim.

Metropolitan Joakim built many churches and magnificent Holy of Holies<sup>633</sup> of which was a wooden Holy of Holies in the church of Korpompadi finished on September 14, 1870. In it, he inscribed two lines in Syriac in his own hand as follows, "This Holy of Holies was built by Cyril Joakim, metropolitan of Malabar in the time of our Father and Lord Patriarch of Antioch Mar Ignatius Jacob II, on September 14, 1870." He also had rooms built in some churches like the two story building at the church of the Virgin in Kandanad. It is inscribed with the following in Syriac, "This building was constructed in the time of our Lord Mar Ignatius Elias II, Patriarch of

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<sup>631</sup> See his letter at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>632</sup> See his letter addressed to the Chorepiscopus Philip dated July 9, 1852.

<sup>633</sup> The Holy of Holies is a wooden canopy covering the table on which the elements of the Eucharist are offered. TRANS.

Antioch specifically for the use of our Metropolitan Cyril Joakim of Tur 'Abdin by the effort of the Syrian community in 1846."

However, the climate of Malabar did not agree with Metropolitan Joakim, not to mention the responsibilities of his office which weighed heavily down on him. Consequently, his energy sapped and he became exposed to illness and unbearable suffering.<sup>634</sup> His problems and anxiety increased after the ordination of Dionysius Joseph, and he decided to leave Malabar. He asked the permission of Patriarch Jacob to leave the country. On October 1, 1867, Philip, priest of the church of Pampakoda, addressed a letter to the Chorepiscopus Philip saying, "At present, Mar Cyril resides in the church of Kottor. He is sick, weak and has not recovered yet."

On December 26, 1869, Metropolitan Joakim addressed from Tirula a letter to the Chorepiscopus Philip saying, "I feel much better than in the past few years. Still, I cannot eat the food of this country, and thus I am suffering and would like to return home. I was delayed, however, because of the problems caused to my brother Gabriel by his father-in-law. If his condition improves, I will return to the north and then to my homeland."

Evidently, Cyril Joakim was thinking of returning home. The opportunity presented itself when he was called back by the Apostolic See. Unfortunately, he became afflicted by a noxious disease which incapacitated him. Leprosy has spread all over his body. His face shriveled and he lost his sight. He passed away on Tuesday August 20, 1874, having served the church of Malabar about twenty-eight years. Three days after his death, he was buried in the Church of the Apostle Thomas at Mulanthuruthi.<sup>635</sup> His burial service was conducted by Metropolitan Dionysius Joseph and the monks (Rabban) Gurgis and a host of priests and deacons. It was attended by a crowd of parishioners. Metropolitan Joseph telegraphed his death to the patriarch (Peter IV) in London.

Metropolitan Cyril Joakim was proficient in the Syriac language. He was an able calligrapher and well versed in the Scriptures and religious sciences. He was also a powerful orator but had a lisp when pronouncing the letter R.<sup>636</sup> He had a good knowledge of church chorals and was endowed with a melodious voice. He was of tall stature. He wore a large beard inter-

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<sup>634</sup> See his letter from Kallissery to the Chorepiscopus Philip date February 8, 1854.

<sup>635</sup> See the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter ode composed by his brother Gabriel.

<sup>636</sup> See his biography in Syriac at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

spersed with white hair. He was courageous, prudent and awe-inspiring. He was chaste, but his chastity was tarnished by slight greed.

He left many letters in Syriac treating church problems in his time. Many of them have already been cited. He also left some lines in the Sa-rugite (twelve-syllabic) meter and a few *systaticons*<sup>637</sup> for the clergy whom he ordained. Following is a copy of one of these *systaticons*.

In the Name of the Eternal, the Everlasting, and the Almighty.

Cyril Joakim the wretched Metropolitan of India and Malabar.

May divine grace descend upon the priests, deacons, stewards and the congregation of the lesser Church of Kottayam. You are well aware that our Lord Jesus Christ set up, through his Apostles in the earthly church chief priests, priests, deacons and half-deacons, readers and psalters to worship him following the example of the Church of the First-Born in heaven. Therefore, by the authority I received from God through our Lord Mar Ignatius the exalted Patriarch of Antioch, I declare that the deacon Joseph has freely received from my hand, I the wretched, the dignity of the priesthood as instituted by the Gospel of salvation and in conformity with your election of him. We have commanded him to conduct himself in the church like the priests of God do without trouble or conflict. We have also asked him to write down a covenant testifying that he will not change anything of our commands. Receive him with alacrity when he arrives at your place according to our Lord's command who said, "He who accepts you will also accept me." We beseech God to render this ordination a blessing to all of you and grant the ordained priest joy and peace in this world and the world to come by the prayers of the Mother of God and of our Lord Mar Ignatius the exalted Patriarch and all the saints. Amen. Glory to God forever. Amen

We have permitted the ordained priest to serve only in the said church like other priests without addition or subtraction according to the canons of the Holy Church of Antioch.

This *systaticon*, vouched by God, was given on December 4, 1850 at the church of Agaparamp.

The bishopric seal of Cyril Joakim was inscribed in Syriac thus, "Cyril Joakim Metropolitan of Malabar." It was inscribed two years following his ordination. He had also another small seal inscribed in Arabic thus, "Metropolitan Cyril Joakim at the See of St. Thomas."

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<sup>637</sup> Letters of commendations. TRANS.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE JOURNEY OF PATRIARCH PETER TO MALABAR

We have seen earlier the myriad of problems facing the church of Malabar. First, Patriarch Elias II desired to journey to Malabar to investigate the situation of the church and restore peace to it.<sup>638</sup> But he died before fulfilling his desire. This was also the desire of his successor Patriarch Jacob II.<sup>639</sup> He also had no opportunity to do so. Thus, the affairs of the church of Malabar were as tumultuous as ever. But when Patriarch Peter IV ascended the Patriarchal Throne, he became concerned with this church. Meantime, the church of Malabar wanted to know whether the patriarch had relations with the Czar of Russia.<sup>640</sup>

While he was in London presenting the case of the church of Malabar to the British government, Patriarch Peter IV unexpectedly received an appeal from Dionysius Joseph to visit Malabar and extend his apostolic blessing to its community. Dionysius repeated his appeal and asked the patriarch to appoint a date for his blessed visit. On January 11, 1875, he addressed a letter to the patriarch saying that the Syrians of Malabar are becoming distressed because of his delay in London. The Patriarch accepted the invitation. He addressed a letter to Dionysius Joseph on January 14 saying that he would visit Malabar but didn't know when. He also addressed a reply on February 31, to the letter of Chorepiscopus Philip which he had received two days earlier. He said, "They, (the Malabarians) are asking me to visit them soon and to enact for them proper laws and regulations. Meantime, the congregations of Syria and Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) also want us to pay them a visit. When I have accomplished my task in London, God willing, I will visit Malabar." He also sent to the Chorepiscopus his photo as a present.<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> See his letter dated September 1, 1840

<sup>639</sup> See the letter of Metropolitan Cyril Joakim to the patriarch in the spring of 1866, and the letter of Dionysius Joseph to the same patriarch dated October 21, 1870.

<sup>640</sup> See the letter of Chorepiscopus Philip to Jirjis Sarsam of Mosul, in the spring of 1873 and its reply on June 5, of this year.

<sup>641</sup> See the letter of Chorepiscopus Philip to Anton 'Abd al-Nur dated March 19, 1875.

Patriarch Peter spent seven months in London during which he met with prominent English statesmen who honored him greatly. Twice, he had audiences with Queen Victoria. The first was on February 21, 1875. He requested her to provide him with orders and instructions to the British Resident and other officials in India because he was intending to visit his community in that country and investigate its affairs. The queen promised him well. The second audience was granted by her Majesty's on Friday February 28, 1875. The patriarch was accompanied by Metropolitan Gregorius 'Abd Allah and both had dinner with her Majesty. She presented the patriarch with a high decoration for this occasion and provided him with orders and instructions for the British authorities in India.

The Protestant (Anglican) propagandists in India addressed a letter through the bishops of Madras and Calcutta, to the Archbishop of Canterbury to support their friend Matta against the patriarch, but failed. In fact, the British government showed the patriarch utmost affection and fulfilled his request despite the problems he confronted. He was hailed as a pious church father that adheres to the true faith. They were astonished for his memorizations of a myriad of Biblical passages by heart. They were impressed by his conversations which were replete with allusions to and quotations from the Bible. They personally testified to his virtues in their publications.<sup>642</sup>

On Saturday March 22, 1875, Patriarch Peter left London bound for India via Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt. On May 7, he arrived in Bombay and met with the British governor and the Ottoman consul. He telegraphed Dionysius Joseph and the excommunicated Matta to meet him. Joseph did but Matta did not show up. Of those who went out to meet him were the deacon Stephen of Azekh<sup>643</sup> and Maqdisi Gabriel, brother of Metropolitan

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<sup>642</sup> E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 207–209.

<sup>643</sup> Deacon Stephen was son of Hanna Zarah of Azekh who was likely born in Azekh around 1838. He learned a smattering of the Syriac language and left Azekh for Mosul where he was engaged in copying Syriac manuscripts in his good handwriting. He was married. In April, 1872, he accompanied Maqdisi Khadduri Bunni al-Tawil of Mosul, to Malabar to seek financial aid. But the two separated in Baghdad. Khadduri went ahead to Malabar and was followed by the deacon Stephen who reached that country in December. He attached himself to Metropolitan Joseph and showed, outwardly, a great enthusiasm for orthodoxy and its leadership. A few months later, in June, 1873 he composed in Syriac a lengthy ode in the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter characterized by poor style, grammatical mistakes and repetition. At best, it was thoughtless. In it, he described at length the calamity of

Cyril Joakim. On May 15, he left Bombay by train for Madras to meet with its governor who was then in his summer resort of Neel Kerri. He had audience with him on May 22, and spent a few days as his guest. Afterwards, he journeyed to Malabar where he was received with tremendous welcome never seen before in that country. It was so colossal that upon seeing the crowds, the heathens began asking whether the visitor was the god of the Christians. On May 29, the patriarch stayed at the church of St. Joseph in Kunnankulam, the first city densely inhabited by Syrians. On June 9, he reached Cochin and was officially welcomed by its government and the Syrian community. Upon disembarking, he was welcomed by the British Resident and authorities and by an eleven gun salute. He was led to a special mansion where one hundred twenty Syrian priests were waiting to receive him.

On June 21, the patriarch left Cochin for Trivandrum, capital of Cochin, reaching it on the 26<sup>th</sup>. He was welcomed by the raja's band playing music in his honor. Shortly afterwards, he was visited by the Head of the Diwan (the prime minister) who was delegated by the raja to welcome him and congratulate him for his safe arrival. On July 5, he had an audience with Raja Farma who honored him and appointed two of his private royal guards to attend to him during his stay in Trivandrum. He also placed under his disposal his own yacht for transportation. On September 12, the raja visited the patriarch at his residence. Afterwards, the patriarch toured the cities and villages stretching along the Malabar Coast which were densely populated by Syrians. He was welcomed with magnificent celebrations and great pomp. In fact, he became a focus of attraction of high ranking officials of the government.

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the church of Malabar, inflicted by Matta Palakonan, and his injustice and recklessness. He also had the audacity to criticize Metropolitan Cyril Joakim with the most objectionable terms. Evidently, he was instigated by the metropolitan's foes, namely, the priest Philip Edavazhikal and his son, and the metropolitan Joseph. Metropolitan Joseph, hypocritically praised Bishop Stephen with obvious bias, while meantime, defaming his companion the monk Shim'un (Simon). Deacon Stephen delivered this ode to the patriarch. In April, 1874, he turned against Metropolitan Joseph disparaging him and accusing him of treachery against the Apostolic See. He then showed inclination toward Matta but turned against him when he received nothing from him. At the end of 1875, his conduct worsened and he died in Malabar. As for Khadduri, he is thought to have been born in 1828, and visited Jerusalem in 1866. He was fickle who joined Matta for sheer gain, but later turned against him. He returned home in utter failure.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CHOREPISCOPUS PHILIP EDAVAZHICAL

The priest Philip Edavazhikal was blessed with seven sons.<sup>644</sup>

The Chorepiscopus Philip was born in Kottayam on Thursday September 22, 1831. His renowned father was the priest Philip and his mother was Susan. When he was young he studied the Syriac language and religious sciences under his father. He was ordained a reader for the great church of Kottayam. On June 13, 1850, Bishop Stephen, the Apostolic Delegate, ordained him a full deacon at the church of Mulanthuruthi in Malabar. On the next day, the bishop addressed a letter from the church of Mulanthuruthi to the priest Philip saying, "I have ordained on Pentecost Day in the presence of a group of parishioners from the churches of the north fourteen deacons of them was his son Philip and four readers. Malphono (teacher) Abraham Konat read the *systatikon* (letter of commendation) amidst overwhelming joy." After his ordination, the bishop provided Philip with a document of ordination No. 133, dated June 13, 1850. He instructed the priests, stewards and administrators of the Great Church of the Mother of God to accept him and honor him. He said that when Philip came to reside with him, he noticed, with the eye of the spirit, that he was worthy of the dignity of a deacon. Therefore, when his companions received this dignity on Pentecost, he (Philip) also received the dignity of a deacon by the will of the Holy Spirit.<sup>645</sup>

Priest Philip wanted to have his son, Deacon Philip, ordained a priest while he was still celibate. This, however, did not receive the approval of Metropolitan Cyril Joakim and Bishop Stephen. In February, 1851, he addressed a letter to the bishop that he was anxious to have his son ordained either by him or by Metropolitan Cyril Joakim. Bishop Stephen replied on February 19 that he has not yet received orders from the patriarch abrogating the canon which forbids celibates from being ordained priests. This is despite the fact that priest Philip was aware that his son had rejected his advice and the pledge he made by signing the cross during the recitation of the holy *homologia* (confession of faith). This contravention of the canons

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<sup>644</sup> He had seven sons and two daughters. His sons were Matthu (Matthew), his first born, Cheriyan (Zechariah) Pothen (Philip), Kojop (Joseph), Korola (Peter), Gurgis, Kurien. His daughters were Niti (Martha) and Kojajo (Susan). See his letter in the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter addressed to Timothy Abraham, bishop of Edessa, mentioned earlier.

<sup>645</sup> This letter is in the possession of the Edavazhikal family, and a copy in my possession.

caused a conflict between Metropolitan Cyril Joakim and priest Philip. It should be remembered that Metropolitan Cyril Joakim had addressed a letter to the priest Philip on March 8, 1851, couched in strong language. The metropolitan reminded Philip and the priest Abraham that since his arrival in Cochin, he made it clear that he would never ordain celibates as priests. He also told priest Philip that if his son chose to remain celibate, he would invest him with the monastic habit and then ordain him a monk-priest. Apparently, the letters of Metropolitan Cyril and Bishop Stephen aroused Philip's anger against these dignitaries which caused him to sever his relations with them for some time. On April 14, 1851, Bishop Athanasius Stephen addressed a letter No. 37, to Philip from the church of Thompon blaming him for his silence and for not informing him about many events which occurred in the north. He also remonstrated that he did not inquire about his health while he suffered illnesses. He asked him not to be wrathful lest both would be ridiculed by foes. Nevertheless, the celibate deacon Philip was ordained a priest and then a Chorepiscopus in the fall of this year, most likely by Metropolitan Cyril Joakim. On November 18, the monk Shim'un of Isphes, congratulated Philip for his ordination.

Chorepiscopus Philip was an ardent combatant for the orthodox faith and the authority of the Apostolic See over the church of Malabar. To accomplish his noble aim, he corresponded with the Apostolic See and with many clergymen and notables in Malabar, Iraq and Beth Nahrin. Of these were specifically the Patriarchs Jacob II and Peter IV, the Metropolitans Cyril Jirjis, Dionysius Behnam Samarchi of Mosul, Cyril Denha, bishop of St. Matthew's Monastery, the monk Joseph of the same monastery and the Syrian nobles Jirjis, son of Butrus Sarsam, 'Abd al-Ahad 'Abd al-Nur and his brother the deacon Behnam and his son Anton, the deacon Behnam Archilidos and Butrus Kassab of Mosul. We have already seen that his correspondence had a great effect on the history of Malabar. It also enhanced the position of the Chorepiscopus Philip and his father priest Philip in the church.

In one of his letters addressed to 'Abd al-Ahad 'Abd al-Nur of Mosul, Chorepiscopus Philip described the destructive actions of the excommunicated Matta against the faith and the Apostolic See. He said, "Don't think or conclude that the holy faith or the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch will vanish in Malabar. Never! No one can achieve this whether it is Matta or others, because the majority follows in the footsteps of the fathers of Antioch. Still, however, Matta could cause harm."

Upon reading the fathers' letters to Philip, one realizes his distinguished position and commendable strife for the cause of the church. On

July 20, 1862, Cyril Denha, bishop of St. Matthew's Monastery, addressed to him a letter, in the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter, composed by the deacon Stephen of Azekh in reply to his letter, praising him and his father in most affectionate terms. He extended to him the best wishes of his clergymen.<sup>646</sup>

On March 10, 1868, Patriarch Jacob II addressed to Philip a reply to his letter saying, "My heart delights in you. Your love is deep-rooted in my heart. Although you are far in body, you are near in spirit. I shall not forget you but will constantly remember you in my prayers and in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist." We have also seen Jirjis, son of Butrus Sarsam, lauds him greatly for his zeal for the cause of the faith in his letter dated July 27, 1875 in reply to Philip's letter dated April 23.

The correspondence of Chorepiscopus Philip with Metropolitan Behnam Samarchi of Mosul began on January 8, 1873. In a reply to one of his letters, the metropolitan said, "Everyone knows you to be zealous for the orthodox faith. Like your late father you desire to build the church of Malabar. Indeed, by his contribution to the church, the orthodox faith and the Holy Apostolic See, your father has gained a good name in your country. I have heard of his (Philip's) endeavor, zeal and excellent deeds for the benefit of the Malabar community." Philip replied on September 24, of this year thanking the metropolitan for his good intentions.

However, despite his distinguished renown, Chorepiscopus Philip is to blame for exaggerating his criticism of Metropolitan Cyril Joakim. This is despite the fact that in 1851 he called him "the perfect Malphono (teacher) of the truth."

It seems from the letter he addressed jointly with the priest Gurgis Konat to Patriarch Jacob II on November 1, 1870, that Chorepiscopus Philip has been bedridden for several years. He says he was distressed because of the excessive expenses incurred by his illness and by the daily persecution waged against him by Matta. On February 7, 1874, his brother, the deacon Gurgis, addressed a letter to the metropolitan of Mosul informing him that the Chorepiscopus was bedridden.<sup>647</sup>

Chorepiscopus Philip was very anxious to see Patriarch Peter IV and receive his blessing, but could not. He passed away at midnight of May 14,

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<sup>646</sup> In this letter were mentioned the names of the Gurgis, priest of Ba'shiqa and Bahzani, Iliyya (Elijah), Shim'un (Simon), Zechariah, priests of Bartulli, Gabriel, priest of Qop and 'Abd Yeshu', priest of 'Aqra.

<sup>647</sup> This letter is at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

1875, when the patriarch was in Bombay. He was lamented by the people who shed tears over him. He left behind a memorable name which cannot be blighted by the vicissitudes of time. His brother conveyed the news of his death to the patriarch in Bombay and to some metropolitans, priests, deacons and notables in Mosul and Beth Nahrin.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF CHOREPISCOPUS PHILIP**

The Chorepiscopus Philip was a staunch opponent of Matta and his corrupt teachings by word and deed. Matta retaliated by instigating his wicked lackeys, namely, Kojop Chankalon, Kora Thuman Paliporkal, Matthan son of Pothan Pankar and Chandi son of Yuhanna Maluchery against him. On Sunday morning of January, 1860, while Philip was standing at the altar of the lesser church of Kottayam to celebrate the Eucharist, these wicked men laid their hands on him. They beat him, insulted him and dragged him away from the altar. He fell to the floor breaking his left hand. When his father the priest and his two brothers Mathu and Kojo Korola arrived at the scene, these wicked men beat them and looted the vessels of the Eucharist. It is said that the priest Joseph Maluchery was in the company of the wicked attackers. That Sunday, the church was deprived of the celebration of the Eucharist. The Chorepiscopus Philip, who related this incident, appealed to the Lord Jesus to avenge the dignity of the honorable priesthood which they had disdained.<sup>648</sup>

Matta had suspended the Chorepiscopus Philip from priestly services, but Philip disobeyed him.<sup>649</sup> Some even closed Philip's church but he had it reopened by the governor's order. He remained until 1873 enduring the oppression of his opponent Matta. For a long time he could not perform the necessary prayers or celebrate the Eucharist because he had no church building to do so. Also, Philip communicated with the Chorepiscopus Gurgis and the priest Gurgis of Mulanthuruthi lamenting his deplorable condition.<sup>650</sup> Chorepiscopus Gurgis replied praising his zeal for the cause of the church and expressing sorrow for the scarcity of combatants who would defend the faith after the death of their fathers and teachers.

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<sup>648</sup> See the comments of the Chorepiscopus and his father on church service books and on a copy of the liturgy preserved at the Library of the priest Luke Edavazhikal.

<sup>649</sup> See his letter to Metropolitan Cyril Joakim dated January 14, 1860.

<sup>650</sup> See his letter dated September 13, 1871.

Likewise, Chorepiscopus Philip addressed a letter to Professor George Philip, D. D. of Cambridge, complaining about Matta's persecution and his attempt to abolish the ancient Syrian rituals and supercede them with objectionable ones. He further complained that Matta was intending to eradicate the Syriac language from Malabar and support the Anglican missionaries by falsified and garnished reports. He specifically mentioned Matta's persecution of him.<sup>651</sup>

Philip also addressed letters to some people reminding them that his father spent his life defending the orthodox faith. Now he is tortured and beaten by Matta before the eyes of all Syrians. The Syrians, he complains, do not seem to rush to his aid or even care for him. He further said that Matta, his antagonist, laid hands on his family's cemetery and forbade burying any of its members in it. He goes on to say that the governor summoned him to Trivandrum on August 12, 1873, to obtain his approval regarding the ownership of a garden. He laments that he has been suffering because of it for the last fifteen years.<sup>652</sup>

Chorepiscopus Philip was active in teaching, without compensation, poor students and deacons the Old and the New Testaments, the Syriac language and church chorals at his home from 1875 until his incapacitation by illness.<sup>653</sup>

For his burning desire to teach the clergy church rituals, he bought a piece of land in Chankonam to build a small monastery on it. On September 13, 1871, he requested the two priests of Mulanthuruthi for financial aid. Except for a room built by a Canaanite notable named Mark or Nattikal, the construction of the monastery was suspended for lack of funds. But in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Canaanite diocese constructed a large two-story monastery named after St. Ephraim. It became the metropolitan seat of the new diocese.

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<sup>651</sup> See his letter dated September 25, 1872.

<sup>652</sup> See his letter to the deacon Stephen Zarah of Azekh dated August 4, 1873 and the letter of his brother Gurgis to the metropolitan of Mosul in the same year.

<sup>653</sup> See his letter to George Philip in 1872, and the letters addressed to him by the monk 'Abd Allah Makhluḥ dated June 8, 1857, and Maqdisi Gabriel dated December 23, 1865.

## CHAPTER NINE: THE WRITINGS OF CHOREPISCOPUS PHILIP AND HIS COPYING OF SERVICE BOOKS

The Chorepiscopus Philip was proficient in the Syriac language and church sciences. As he became popular in Malabar, Syrian clergymen desired to study under him. We have come upon a letter, written in the Eastern<sup>654</sup> script by the Chaldean Deacon Joseph from the village of Thorotippaly in the Palay diocese, dated August 5, 1880, addressed to the Chorepiscopus Philip from the school of Monannam, thinking that he was still living. In this letter Deacon Joseph praised his judiciousness which surpassed his companions. He also lauded his profound knowledge and desired to learn about it. The letter was delivered by another deacon also named Joseph from Mulanthuruthi. It demonstrates Philip's learning prominence.

Philip corresponded with Syriac scholars including Rev. George Philip, D. D., Dean of Queens College in Cambridge. On April 30, 1872, he wrote to the dean saying that he was informed that he was a Syriac scholar and has compiled in this language a dictionary which was circulated in England. He asked him to provide him with a copy of the same saying, "We do not have a press, and thus, Syriac books are wanting except for the Holy Bible published in London." Dean Philip sent him a copy of his dictionary. The Chorepiscopus replied on September 25 thanking him for his gift and praising his writings. He rejoined saying, "Blessed God who has raised in England a distinguished professor and supporter of the Aramaic language which has become aged at the point of vanishing."

Following is some of his writings which we came upon:

1) A hymn in the tune of Qum Phaulos (Rise O' Paul) he composed while still a deacon on the ten plagues inflicted upon Egypt; an ode in the Quqoyo melody<sup>655</sup> on priestly ranks; a four lines ode he composed in 1871 in the Ephramite (seven-syllabic) meters containing an intercession for his psalter brother Gurgis; a three lines ode of the same theme inserted at the beginning of the grammar book in the handwriting of the said Psalter; a lengthy Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter hymn on the miracles of Christ composed in 1865 and circulated to the clergy of Malabar.<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>654</sup> Nestorian or Chaldean. TRANS.

<sup>655</sup> This melody is composed by Deacon Simon the Potter (d. 514) while working on the wheel. See Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls*, translated by Matti Moosa (Gorgias Press, 2003), 252–253

<sup>656</sup> See the letter of the priest Gurgis Konat to Chorepiscopus Philip dated December 1, 1865.

- 2) Fifty pages treatise in Syriac on the church of Malabar.
- 3) A book on *The Christians of St. Thomas* published by some of his friends in London.
- 4) Several articles in English published in *The Church Chronicle* defending the faith of the Syrian church and the authority of the See of Antioch over the church of Malabar.
- 5) A *Catechism* for Syrian students.
- 6) Diverse prose and metrical letters some of which are already cited in the previous chapters.

Chorepiscopus Philip had an elegant Syriac handwriting. He copied in the Western script several ritual books including the *Shbimo* and printed it in lithograph. He also transcribed two manuscripts: one in 1850 when he was still a deacon, containing services of the priesthood with the obligatory divine service books of St. Jirjis (George) and St. Thomas. This manuscript is prefaced by the comment of Metropolitan Athanasius 'Abd al-Masih of Amid in Garshuni (Arabic in Syriac script) added from another manuscript. He mentioned that the paper was donated by the notable Canaanite Mamen<sup>657</sup> of the family of Kallamparamapil and a parishioner of the church of the Apostle St. Thomas in the town of Rani in the south. He intended the transcription to be a lasting memorial for himself and for his father the elder Abraham and his entire household. The second manuscript containing liturgies was completed in 1851.

## CHAPTER TEN: THE APOLOGETICS OF CHOREPISCOPUS PHILIP

The Chorepiscopus Philip was on guard for anyone intending to attack the Syrian church. Following is a tract published in *The Church Chronicle* in London refuting the claims of some critics.

On April 20, 1873, he wrote in the *Chronicle* through Rev. George Howard, "I read the two letters of Henry Baker published in *The Church Chronicle* on September 1, 1871. I don't think that the readers realize that what they contain is not true. To prove this, I am writing not for the sake of controversy or triumph, but to have the readers understand the truth. I hope that the venerable brother Rev. George Howard will kindly translate what I have written and submit it to *The Church Chronicle* for publication." He goes on to say that, "The truth is that when Athanasius Matta was a deacon, he celebrated the Eucharist in violation of the canons of the church of Christ. He was still a deacon when he left Malabar for Madras, was a

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<sup>657</sup> He is the one who addressed a letter to Patriarch Elias II on March 3, 1847.

deacon when he left Madras for Mosul and was a deacon when he arrived in this city. In fact, he was ordained a deacon by Dionysius IV. Evidently, Matta celebrated the Eucharist in Mosul while still a deacon.”

Chorepiscopus Philip further said, “The churches of Malabar are not independent. Otherwise, how could Matta brag that he was in control of them? In fact, after he was excommunicated by the patriarch, he wished that these churches had remained independent. He also elicited the aid of Henry Baker who intended to annex them to his own church. As for the Papists, if they intend to persecute a church not in communion with them, they do this with full force until they annex it to their own church. However, if they realize that they cannot implement this stratagem they resort to a different one. They welcome the expelled or excommunicated clergymen and through them, bring their entire congregations under Papal submission. This was also the stratagem used by the (Anglican) missionaries.”

In another tract of same kind, Philip wrote,

1) “Henry said that the missionaries extend no financial aid to Matta.” The truth is that the Malabar missionary Korola said on p. 115, 1872 (Apparently in the *Church Chronicle* TRANS.] that, “The fund deposited in the treasury was given to Matta by effort of the Bishop of Madras and the missionary Henry Baker.” In the newspaper, *Arkas Cochín*, Philip wrote a similar thing on December 2, 1870.

2) Philip says that G. Philips, Matta’s nephew, said, ‘Matta despises the oblations especially those offered for the dead, while Henry says that Matta celebrated the Eucharist for forty days for the rest of the soul of Dionysius.’ Let the readers judge in this matter.

3) I do not understand why Henry says that Cyril’s brother has nine thousand rupees while Matta’s brothers were penniless. The truth is that Matta built for his brothers a large mansion and enriched them with plenty of silver and gold. I think that Henry forgot to mention this.

4) According to the (Sixth) Canon of the Council of Nicaea, the Patriarch of Antioch had authority over the entire East; India as a matter of fact, was connected to the East. Also, everyone knows that Thomas the Canaanite and his folks who came to Kodungallor were not Nestorians because Nestorius was not yet born. I think they were Syrians who came to Kodungallor by order of the Patriarch of Antioch. Otherwise, let anyone explain by whose order they came and what was their belief?

5) The Patriarchal tithe was delivered to the Patriarch of Antioch at different times. In 1666, it amounted to 36,000 Malabar dinars. It was delivered by a person named Ayouza, then by an archdeacon who carried a letter from the patriarch, then by someone called Judha, and finally by the deacon



Peter. In 1874, it was delivered by Gurgis of Mardin; in 1852, by Rabban (monk) Shim'un (Simon); in 1857, by 'Abd al-Nur, metropolitan of Jerusalem, and in 1864, by the priest Joseph (the present Dionysius Joseph).

6) G. Philip, Matta's nephew, opposed the patriarch and the Syrian faith more than Matta. He taught at the seminary. He was not a priest of the ancient church of Malabar but only a priest of the new heretical community called Palakonnun. He was not a Malphono (teacher, educator) of the Syrians, since the earliest and only Malphono was Konat (Abraham).

7) Philoxenus perished after the ordination of Dionysius Chepat (Dionysius IV). How did he then lay his hands on him and ordain him as (Henry) claims?

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: PATRIARCH BUTRUS (PETER) ANNULS THE ABSOLUTION OF THE EXCOMMUNICATED MATTA

The first thing Patriarch Peter did in Travancore was to annul the decree which the maharaja of Travancore granted the excommunicated Matta based on the *systatikon* (letter of commendation) of Patriarch Elias II. On July 5, he had an audience with the maharaja and discussed with him the abrogation of the royal decree granted Matta. The maharaja promised to do his best in this case. On August 15, he addressed a letter<sup>658</sup> to the maharaja asking him to fulfill his promise in order that he may return to the residence of his Patriarchal See. In September, the maharaja abrogated the decree and sent his decision to the British Resident<sup>659</sup> who, in turn, delivered it to the governor of Madras. The Resident informed the patriarch of the maharaja's decision. The patriarch addressed a letter to the prime minister expressing his gratefulness and joy.<sup>660</sup>

Upon discovering that the governor of Madras was biased trying to rescind the maharaja's decision, the patriarch complained against him to the governor of Calcutta, who was then the supreme judge of India. He requested him to stop the governor of Madras from interfering in the spiritual matters of the church. He provided him with an account of Matta since his ordination. He also explained the church's regulations of installing or re-

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<sup>658</sup> The Patriarch's letters and their copies mentioned up to Chapter Seventeen are preserved at the library of the Za'faran Monastery and at the Patriarchal Library in Homs.

<sup>659</sup> See the patriarch's letter to the Diwan (Prime Minister) of Travancore dated August 2, 1875.

<sup>660</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated August 26, 1875.

moving bishops.<sup>661</sup> The patriarch received a telegram from the governor of Madras confirming the decision of the maharaja saying that he would transmit it immediately to the Resident. But Ballard, the former British Resident who was removed from office by Lord Salisbury,<sup>662</sup> pressured the governor of Madras to transmit the decision and other documents to London for Salisbury's scrutiny. He wrote to the patriarch informing him of this action. The patriarch wrote to Tremlett, Salisbury's secretary, asking him to expedite the decision regarding this case.<sup>663</sup> Three months later, the patriarch received a telegram from Salisbury denying that he received anything from Madras. The patriarch addressed a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury dated September 5, and attached to it copies of the telegrams sent to him in this regard. He also sent a telegram to the governor of Madras on November 25, inquiring about this case.

It is most likely, that the English bishop and his vicars in India were in league with the rulers to obstruct the endeavor of the patriarch who exposed their action saying, "They are envious and hypocritical having no spirit of God. They are thieves who robbed the seminary of the Syrians in Kottayam and pillaged its possessions and fields. They eat and drink and could care less about those who are outside the fold of Christ."<sup>664</sup>

In mid-February, 1876, the governor of Madras sent his decision to the Resident in Travancore, who received it at Cochin. The Resident transmitted it to the maharaja who instructed the prime minister to deliver it to the patriarch. The prime minister wrote to the patriarch saying that next week he would stamp the decision with the maharaja's seal.<sup>665</sup> The patriarch wrote to the maharaja to end the case soon.<sup>666</sup> On March 4, 1876, the maharaja issued a decree abrogating the proclamation which legitimized Matta's position as a lawful metropolitan. He said that, "Matta produced a letter from the patriarch of Antioch ordaining him a metropolitan for all India. He authorized him to preach and teach spiritual matters according to the traditions and canons of the ancient church without equivocation. Thus,

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<sup>661</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated September 4.

<sup>662</sup> Lord Salisbury was Secretary to India in the cabinet of Benjamin Disraeli in 1874. TRANS.

<sup>663</sup> See his letter dated September 7, 1875.

<sup>664</sup> See his letter to Mr. Tremlett who was in charge of St. Peter's Church dated December 16, 1875, and his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury dated November 25, 1875.

<sup>665</sup> See the patriarch's letter to the maharaja dated February 26, 1876.

<sup>666</sup> See his letter dated February 20, 1876.

Matta requested us to endorse him. Accordingly, we granted him a decree as requested by the patriarch. We circulated a proclamation to the Syrian churches in Malabar to accept Matta as a lawful metropolitan. But the former two patriarchs and the present one excommunicated and rejected him. For this reason, we abrogated our royal decree and the former proclamation and removed Matta as requested by the patriarch. The heathen kings of Travancore, since the time of St. Thomas, granted their Syrian subjects religious freedom until the arrival of the Catholics and the Protestant missionaries. The government of Travancore will not, then, interfere in the installation or removal of Syrian metropolitans; it is only careful that no quarrel or conflict is provoked within the Syrian community.”

The maharaja also confirmed, implicitly, the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch over the church of Malabar. However, he granted the two groups (of Matta and the Patriarch) the right to take the case of the churches and their properties to the civil courts.

No doubt, the maharaja's proclamation was a death blow to the expectations of the Protestant (Anglican) propagandists who intended to twist the belief of the Syrians by force. Moreover, Matta's followers in Kunnankulam wired three hundred rupees to Lord Salisbury to thwart the patriarch's activity. They received an adverse reply which plunged them into utter despair.<sup>667</sup> Likewise, the Diwan (prime minister) sent to the patriarch six copies of the maharaja's decree for which the patriarch thanked him. He expressed his own joy and that of the Syrian community. He asked him, graciously, to have the decree delivered in English to other parts of India which do not speak Malayalam.<sup>668</sup> He also requested the governor of Madras to write to the government of Travancore to take away from Matta the *ystaticon*, the golden cross, the silver staff, the head cap, the miter and the church vessels which are the possession of the Patriarch of Antioch, as stipulated by the canons. This was the same thing done by the English bishop of Madras when he expelled the English vicar, Joseph, and took away from him the covenant and fined him three hundred rupees by the authority of the Resident and the government.<sup>669</sup> Moreover, the patriarch addressed a letter to the maharaja of Cochin to issue a royal decree rescinding the said proclamation.

<sup>667</sup> See the papers of Canaanite priest Gurgis (later metropolitan) in the possession of the Edavazhikal family.

<sup>668</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated February 27, 1876.

<sup>669</sup> See his letter dated March 9, 1876.

The Patriarch went to Trivandrum to extend thanks to the maharaja.<sup>670</sup> On March 15, he arrived in the capital and wrote to the maharaja asking for an audience.<sup>671</sup> On the next day he met with the maharaja and thanked him greatly.<sup>672</sup> Finally, the patriarch addressed a letter to the governor of Madras form Puthupally dated October 15, 1876 and another one to the British Resident dated November 3, 1876, requesting them to prevail on the government of Cochin to issue a similar decision.

## CHAPTER TWELVE: PATRIARCH PETER VISITS THE SYRIAN CHURCHES

At the beginning of September 1875, Patriarch Peter paid a visit to the maharaja and discussed with him his intended visit to the Syrian churches in order to investigate their spiritual affairs. The maharaja promised to write to the authorities in Travancore to welcome him.<sup>673</sup> The excommunicated Matta was then in Trivandrum but left it for Niranam before the patriarch's arrival.<sup>674</sup> On September 12, the maharaja returned the visit. On the next day, the patriarch addressed a letter to the Syrian community of Kottayam saying that his work has been properly accomplished and that he would leave Trivandrum. But he would return after three days. He wanted them to prepare the seminary for his lodging.

After leaving Trivandrum the patriarch visited first the Syrian churches of the south. On September 28, he had a proclamation circulated to the entire Syrian churches of Malabar explaining the destructive deeds of Matta, already mentioned in the previous chapters. He also mentioned his audience with Queen Victoria and the orders and recommendations he obtained in London. He went on to mention his visit to the governor of Madras and the maharaja of Travancore who promised to abrogate the royal decrees they had granted the excommunicated Matta. He was particularly grateful that the maharaja honored him, granted him a decoration and placed two of his guards at his service. Also, he was thankful that the maharaja approved his visit to the Syrian churches and offered him freedom to travel freely.

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<sup>670</sup> See his letter to Mr. Ocker on March 9, 1876.

<sup>671</sup> See his letter dated March 15, 1876.

<sup>672</sup> See his letter to the maharaja on March 29, 1876.

<sup>673</sup> See the patriarch's letter to the Diwan (prime minster) of Travancore dated September 13, 1875 and his proclamation to the churches dated September 28, 1875.

<sup>674</sup> See the patriarch's letter to the maharaja dated September 16, 1875.

The patriarch visited first the town of Kollam and was welcomed by its governor (Peishkar). But when Matta learned of his arrival and staying in the government's guest house, he shut the doors of the churches of Mavelikara, Kozenchery and the Seminary at Kottayam before him.<sup>675</sup> He left Kollam for Mavelikara whose administrator and its tax collector and several police officers welcomed him and accompanied him to Thompon (Thumpamon). The police officers remained in his company until he reached Keppitor. At this town, he was welcomed by the district administrator who accompanied him to Omalloor. Pleased by the administrator's treatment, the patriarch addressed a letter to Peishkar thanking him for welcoming him in his town of Kollam and asking him to take care of the distinct administrator. Also, he complained against the Chief of Police, Makankonnen, for his bad treatment of more than thirty native Syrian families of that town who went to meet the patriarch in Omalloor and receive his blessing.<sup>676</sup>

The patriarch visited most of the churches in the south as far as Kottayam, except the churches of Tirula and Niranam because Matta was there ready for a show down with him.<sup>677</sup> When he learned that the district administrator of Tiruvalla was biased toward Matta, he complained against him to the maharaja and to the administrator of Kollam.<sup>678</sup> In the meantime, Matta went on visiting the churches. He behaved haughtily saying that the patriarch cannot divest him of the episcopate dignity, and he would oppose him as he did the bishops who came before him.<sup>679</sup>

In the course of visiting the churches, the patriarch detected traces of tares which Matta planted in them. He noticed that the majority of priests were not lawfully ordained and did not celebrate the Eucharist according to Syrian rite. Many of them had no true faith and did not understand the honorable dignity of the priesthood. He did his best to guide them to the right path.<sup>680</sup> The patriarch further learned that the Syrian community was disgusted with the priests who hypocritically performed religious services for money. They refused to solemnize weddings unless they received fifty rupees in the name of the church. This forced many poor people who could not pay this amount to shun legitimate marriage. On October 13, 1875, the

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<sup>675</sup> See the patriarch's letter to the maharaja of Travancore dated September, 1875

<sup>676</sup> See the Patriarch's letter dated October 11, 1875.

<sup>677</sup> See his letter to Peishkar Gartalla dated October 31, 1875.

<sup>678</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated October 31, 1875.

<sup>679</sup> See the patriarch's proclamation dated September 28, 1875.

<sup>680</sup> See a printed copy of the tract of Mata Konat, the malphono of Malabar, 9.

patriarch addressed a letter to the maharaja of Travancore asking him to issue a decree to the judges and administrators of Travancore to stop the priests from such practices.

Patriarch Peter wanted to stay in the Seminary at Kottayam, but the Diwan (prime minister) wrote to him on November 20, 1875, to wait a little more until he received a reply from London. The patriarch replied on November 11 saying, "I am the sole spiritual leader of the entire Syrian churches and the seminary and whatever attached to it. I have every right to reside in the seminary because it is the property of my community. Indeed, the seminary is the first proper place for me as the patriarch to stay in. No one can prevent me from doing so not even Matta who has illegally controlled the seminary. In fact, he has no right to stay in it because he was excommunicated for renouncing the Syrian faith. He is like the English minister Cox in Trivandrum who was discharged by the English." The prime minister replied asking the patriarch to wait a little more. But the patriarch addressed a letter to the maharaja requesting him to order the Peishkar (the governor) to have the seminary ready for his staying when he visited Kottayam within few days. He reminded him that it was unfair to alienate a hundred thousand subjects from their sovereign and deliver the seminary to Matta who is followed by only ten people.<sup>681</sup> He further asked the maharaja to forbid the excommunicated Matta from visiting the churches until a decision had arrived from London. He also suggested that the seminary should be closed lest keeping it open might create trouble within the community.<sup>682</sup> Meantime, the patriarch addressed a letter to Peishkar Gartella about the great welcome he received during his visit to the churches of the south in accordance with the royal decree. Again, he requested that the seminary should be made ready for his lodging.<sup>683</sup>

When a decision came from London and Madras, and the maharaja issued a decree abrogating the decree granted Matta, Patriarch Peter IV addressed a letter to the Diwan (prime minister) saying, "It is done. Matta is stripped of worldly and spiritual authority. He should be evicted from the seminary lest things get worse. Indeed, the seminary belongs to all the Syrians in Malabar."<sup>684</sup> The patriarch remained in Kottayam for some time.<sup>685</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> The letter of Patriarch Peter IV dated November 16, 1875.

<sup>682</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated November 31, 1875.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid.

<sup>684</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated March 24, 1876

<sup>685</sup> See his letter to the maharaja of Travancore dated January 3, 1876.

But after the annulment of Matta's decree, he proceeded to visit the churches of the north.

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN: PATRIARCH PETER PROTESTS THE DISTURBANCES IN THE CHURCH

The purpose of Patriarch Peter's visit to India was to emancipate the Syrians and their churches from the yoke of the rebellious Matta. But no sooner he arrived in the capital Travancore than Matta, assisted by Protestant (Anglican) propagandists, opposed him. Matta instigated some rulers and governors to shut the doors of the churches before him and expel his followers. The patriarch, however, did not remain tied handed. He addressed letters to Queen Victoria, Lord Salisbury, the maharaja of Travancore, the British Resident, and the governors of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta and others asking them to treat the Syrians with justice and drive Matta away from their churches. In the meantime, the British Resident, Major Olivey, attempted to provoke disturbances among the Syrians and splitting them into two factions: one supporting Bishop Yusuf (Joseph), the other supporting Matta. His intention was to sever their relations with the Apostolic See. He addressed a letter to Bishop Joseph on August 30, 1875, asking about the number of the Syrians and the churches and congregations of both factions. He also inquired about the differences between the two in spiritual matters, church rites and budgets. But, he did not inquire about these matters from the Patriarch who was nearby in the capital despite that he is the supreme head of the church. The patriarch became outraged and addressed a letter to Queen Victoria and to the governor of Calcutta complaining that the Resident "is harboring malice."<sup>686</sup> Meantime, Bishop Joseph replied to the Resident on the same date saying, "The Syrian churches and their congregations were, from early centuries and are still, spiritually subject to the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch who has the right to install and remove their bishops."

On October 31, 1875, the patriarch addressed a letter to the maharaja and the governor of Kollam complaining against the Syrians' treatment by the revenues commissioners of Mavelikara, Rani and Niranam. Apparently, the commissioner who supported Matta, unjustly, forbade the Syrians to attend their churches.<sup>687</sup> Moreover, based on the commissioner's report, the

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<sup>686</sup> See the Patriarch's letter dated October 22, 1875.

<sup>687</sup> See the Patriarch's letter to the brother of the maharaja dated January 5, 1876.

patriarch scolded the governor for unjustly expelling more than five hundred families of Mavelikara and their priests from their churches. He strongly protested such a treatment saying, "If only one Syrian remained in a church, that church will be considered his. Intruders have no right to it. The proof is the verdict issued in the case of the Papal church of Arthonakal." He advised the maharaja to prevent the governors under his authority from interfering in spiritual matters. Otherwise, he would complain against him to Lord Salisbury and the rulers of India.<sup>688</sup>

Patriarch Peter delegated the two Syrian notables, Curien and Ipor, to Lord Salisbury and to Battlefred, Second Governor of India in London, to complain about the difficult situation of the church of Malabar and request that its case be solved soon.<sup>689</sup> On January 3, 1876, a quarrel ensued in the church of Menergat. The reason was that the revenue commissioner of Kottayam and Matta connived to loot its treasury and vessels. Matta proceeded to this church despite the fact that there were no parishioners supporting him. In fact, the parishioners had already invited the patriarch to come unto them but he excused himself for the roughness of the highway. When Matta attempted to pillage the treasury of the church, he was repulsed by the congregation. He was rescued by the commissioner and the detachment of policemen in his company. They maltreated the parishioners and took to prison in chains. The commissioner refused to listen to their witnesses or take down their testimonies. Rather, motivated by his own whims, he fabricated a report, attached it to the case and delivered it to the court in Alleppy. The court issued a verdict against the congregation. It fined each parishioner twenty- five rupees and the pious priest one hundred rupees or four months in jail. The court also fined their distinguished notable fifty rupees or two months in jail despite the fact that he was not in the village during this incident. The poor among the villagers were driven to prison at the capital. The patriarch addressed a letter to the governor Peishkar Gartella to release these men. Later, he asked the governor Galla Papila of Trivandrum to help them.<sup>690</sup>

When a royal decree was issued abrogating the decree granted Matta, the patriarch proceeded to Trivandrum on March 15, 1876 to extend thanks

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<sup>688</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated November 19, 1875.

<sup>689</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated November 27, 1875.

<sup>690</sup> See the patriarch's letter to the maharaja of Travancore dated January 3, 1876, his letter to the brother of the maharaja dated January 5, 1876 and to the governor Papila dated October 2, 1876.



to the maharaja. He handed him the petition dated March 15, 1876 requesting him to fulfill his promise of settling the church's case soon. He asked the maharaja to issue an order to all the governors stating that the churches belonged to the ancient Syrians. The apostates, renegades and the rebels against the Patriarch of Antioch have no right to them. The maharaja replied that he would discuss the question with the Resident. The patriarch was prompted to address a letter to the British Resident citing the English laws according to which Queen Elizabeth I ordered that anyone changes his faith should not be killed. Some of her successors mitigated this order saying that, "He who changes his faith should not be killed but expelled from the church."<sup>691</sup> The Diwan (prime minister), however, wrote to the patriarch that he could not do more than what he had already done, especially that the government does not interfere in spiritual matters. The patriarch found it appropriate not to pressure the maharaja who was then fasting and expecting the day of festival following the fast. Rather, he chose to approach him in another opportune time. And since the patriarch was, likewise, fasting and Easter was drawing near, and since the Syrians had then no church in the capital, he left for Niranam to celebrate Easter. He left behind the priest Jacob Challaporam to pursue the petition submitted to the maharaja.<sup>692</sup> He arrived in the town on March 27, 1876. On March 29, he reminded the maharaja of his promise. He also informed him of the quarrel in Tiruvalla where Tuma, brother of the priest of Belayari, murdered a Syrian named Pothan. The patriarch appealed to the maharaja to put an end to such evil before it becomes worse.

The patriarch learned that the governor of Kollam had threatened the Syrians of Tirula that entering the church is a violation of the maharaja's order. He addressed a letter to the governor saying that the latest royal decree has rescinded the decree granted Matta and the old proclamation.<sup>693</sup> He also, complained to the maharaja against the governor requesting the maharaja to issue an order to stop this and other governors from evicting the Syrians who lived in his kingdom.<sup>694</sup>

In a letter preceding his last proclamation, the maharaja declared that both groups (of the patriarch and Matta) should retain the churches in their

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<sup>691</sup> The patriarch's letter dated March 16, 1876.

<sup>692</sup> See the patriarch's letter to the maharaja dated March 25, 1876.

<sup>693</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated March 16, 1876.

<sup>694</sup> See the patriarch's two letters dated March 22, 1876.

control until the case is decided.<sup>695</sup> The proclamation which followed, based on the decision of the courts of Madras, was brief and only implicitly recognized the authority of the patriarch over the churches of Malabar. It also granted both groups the right to take their case regarding the ownership of churches and other prosperities to the courts. The patriarch contested this decision in a letter saying, "This matter should have been determined before Matta became a bishop when the entire churches and properties were in the hands of the supporters of the patriarch, whom Matta ousted of their churches. Indeed, they and their congregations were evicted by the Peishkar of Kollam from Mavelikara, Thompon, Omalloor, Baimni, Makenkonnann, Puthencave and Kallopera."<sup>696</sup> The patriarch also contested the contents of the decree saying, "Is there any judge in spiritual matters other than the patriarch?"<sup>697</sup> He also demanded from the governor of Madras to redress his suppressed rights. He asked him to provide him with copies of his decision and the decree of the maharaja. Finally, the patriarch complained against the governor to Lord Salisbury because he had abrogated the just decision of the maharaja which affirmed the supremacy of the patriarch (of Antioch) over the churches of Malabar for more than three hundred years. He also sent Salisbury a copy of the decision which created disturbances and even bloodshed in the churches. Lord Salisbury replied on March 17, 1876 by way of the governor of Bombay, acknowledging receipt of the patriarch's two letters and telegram together with the decision of Madras. He promised to study the case and issue a just verdict.<sup>698</sup>

What complicated things more, is that the British Resident's letter addressed to the governor of Madras to send him the documents of the church's case since 1875 for scrutiny.<sup>699</sup> He inquired about the number of the parishioners of both groups (of the patriarch and Matta.) This afforded Matta and his partisans the opportunity to interfere in the affairs of the churches and challenge their congregations. The patriarch protested saying, "If they (the British Resident) had acted justly, they would have settled the question since 1846." He addressed a letter to Mr. Tremlett asking him to mediate with Lord Salisbury to write to the governors to proclaim the deci-

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<sup>695</sup> See the letter of Patriarch Peter letter to to the maharaja dated June 25, 1876.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>697</sup> See the patriarch's letter to 'Tramlet, secretary of Lord Salisbury dated March 30, 1876.

<sup>698</sup> See the patriarch's letter to Lord Salisbury dated April 5, 1876.

<sup>699</sup> See above Chapter Eleven. TRANS.

sion which has taken too long.<sup>700</sup> He also addressed a letter to Lord Salisbury acknowledging receipt of his letter. He entreated him to prevail on the governor of Madras to provide him with a copy of the maharaja's decision in order to compare both.<sup>701</sup> Also, he sent a telegram to Salisbury from Alleppy to the same effect.

When the patriarch saw that disturbances and troubles intensified among the Syrians to the extent that prayers and the celebration of the Eucharist were suspended in many churches, he requested the Resident to write to the governments of Travancore and Cochin to pacify the situation. He also addressed letters to Queen Victoria, Lord Salisbury, Lord Derby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and to the governors of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay protesting that, "Each denomination has its supreme head. Governments do not interfere in their spiritual affairs except in Malabar. The result is that churches have been desecrated, spiritual ordinances trampled upon by the government and by governors who act freely at will. They empower the wicked and expel pious archpriests. In fact, the government itself celebrates the Eucharist, baptizes people, solemnizes weddings and buries the dead thus usurping church spiritual duties. Still, the government claims that it does not interfere in spiritual matters."<sup>702</sup> This is why I have formerly addressed a letter to the governor of Madras inquiring about the nature of the spiritual canons which he resolved not to interfere in."<sup>703</sup> The patriarch also informed Mosorus Pasha, the Turkish ambassador in London, of what is happening to him in Malabar. He requested him to talk to Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby to issue a decree similar to that granted him by the Ottoman sultan.<sup>704</sup>

At this time, some court decisions were issued confirming the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch over the churches of Malabar. Of these is the verdict of the judge of Calicut issued in the case of the Chaldean Bishop Mallous and the Latin metropolitan of Verapoly. It contained the following, "The Pope and the Chaldean patriarch of Babylon have no authority over the churches of Malabar; they are under the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch since ancient times." Another decision was issued by Galla Papila repudiating Matta Belayar and his supporters. Still, a third decision was is-

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<sup>700</sup> See the patriarch's letter to Mr. Tremlett, secretary of Lord Salisbury, dated March 30, 1876.

<sup>701</sup> See his letter to Lord Salisbury dated April 5, 1876.

<sup>702</sup> See his letter dated December 9, 1876

<sup>703</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated December, 9, 1876.

<sup>704</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated January 3, 1877.

sued by the governor of Kollam stating that, “The Syrian churches of Malabar have been under the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch and no one else since ancient times.” Supported by these decisions, the patriarch addressed letters to the maharaja of Travancore, the prime minister, the British Resident and the governor of Madras<sup>705</sup> and to governor Galla Papila<sup>706</sup> requesting them to issue a decision declaring that, “The entire Syrian churches are subject to the Patriarch of Antioch. Anyone who objects should take his case to the courts.” Thus, the patriarch intended to eliminate the prevalent turbulence in the church. Moreover, he demanded that Syrians should be free to enter the seminary and enroll their children in it to be educated. They should be allowed to use the funds of the general treasury of the company for their education. He also demanded that the funds allotted Matta should be reclaimed and spent for education. He argued that Matta has abused the administration and funds of the seminary.<sup>707</sup>

#### **CHAPTER FOURTEEN: PATRIARCH PETER ESTABLISHES CHURCHES IN MALABAR**

Patriarch Peter had many churches built and consecrated in Malabar. He personally laid the corner stone of some of them. Of these were two churches in Trivandrum, the capital, and Kepitor. The Syrian had previously two churches in Trivandrum: one old and small situated near the city’s wall; the second, near a public high school, was built after the first but was ruined. When the government decided to open a large street cutting through it, it took possession of it without compensating the congregation. However, it promised to offer them another piece of land to build a new church on it. But the government reneged on its promise.<sup>708</sup> When the patriarch visited Trivandrum he found no Syrians in it because they had no church.<sup>709</sup> He bought a tract of land and addressed a letter to the maharaja at the beginning of October, 1875, asking his permission to build a church on it before he departed the country. The maharaja replied on October 20, asking the patriarch to wait until he had received an order from Madras and then

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<sup>705</sup> See the patriarch’s two letters dated January 25, 1877.

<sup>706</sup> See the patriarch’s letter dated March 14, 1877.

<sup>707</sup> See the patriarch’s letter addressed to the governor of Madras from the church of Valenat. on January 9, 1877.

<sup>708</sup> See the patriarch’s letter to the maharaja of Travancore at the beginning of October, 1875.

<sup>709</sup> See the patriarch’s letter to the maharaja dated March 25, 1876.

he would help him build the church. When the maharaja received order from Madras, the patriarch wrote to him on March 22, 1876, reminding him of his promise. The maharaja replied in the affirmative. Upon the patriarch's return to the Patriarchal residence, Metropolitan Joseph proceeded with building a church by effort of the zealous venerable monk Paul Kochoparampil from Mulanthuruthi. The new church was consecrated in the name of St. Jirjis (George) the martyr.

The patriarch laid down the foundation stone of another church in Keppitor in the name of Mar Ignatius the Fiery One.<sup>710</sup> It was registered in the name of the Apostolic See. On October 12, 1875, the patriarch ordained a priest for this church called Abraham, son of priest Gurgis. He provided him with a proclamation for the congregation to receive him with honor and fulfill the rights due to him. He proclaimed the excommunication of the priests unlawfully ordained by Matta and ordered that they should not be permitted to enter their church because Matta is excommunicated and divested from the dignity of the priesthood. The patriarch also had the monastery of Vatikil near Mulanthuruthi registered in the name of the Apostolic See. He visited this monastery and established in it a seminary. He appealed to the churches to assist it in order to graduate venerable priests and monks.<sup>711</sup>

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN: PATRIARCH PETER CONVENES A COUNCIL AT MULANTHURUTHI**

During his stay in Malabar, Patriarch Peter witnessed many reprehensible usages practiced by the Syrians. For example, priests were illegally married. Metropolitans have strayed from the right path. They acted arbitrarily in order to preserve their autocratic power. Some of them, even, rebelled against the Apostolic See. However, after the abrogation of the decree granted Matta, the patriarch addressed a letter to the maharaja of Cochin on March 11, 1876, informing him of his intention to visit the Syrian churches in his kingdom. Also, he said that since they have not yet met each other, he is anxious to meet him personally. His desire was fulfilled and he visited the maharaja.

Meantime, the patriarch consulted with Syrian dignitaries loyal to the See of Antioch his intention to convene a council to regulate the affairs of

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<sup>710</sup> See the journey of priest 'Abd al-Ahad of Ba'shiqa to Malabar.

<sup>711</sup> See the patriarch's letter from Constantinople to Zechariah Jalil, steward of the church of St. Thomas in Mulanthuruthi, dated May 25, 1878.

the Syrian church. On May 19, 1876, he issued a proclamation to the entire churches to send delegates to the council to be convened at the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle in Mulanthuruthi on Tuesday June 15, 1876.

The Council was attended by the Metropolitans Gregorius 'Abd Allah and Dionysius Joseph and the delegate of the entire Syrian churches of Malabar. It was presided over by the patriarch.

The Council discussed the issues of church regulations, apostolic traditions, the authority of the See of Antioch, the administration of the church, dividing it into dioceses and restoring the usurped churches and their properties. Also, it issued necessary canons and established two democratic committees. The first committee would consist of one hundred and three members including priests and laymen. The second would consist of twenty-four members to be elected from the members of the first committee. Eight of them are priests and the rest, laymen. The first committee was to act as an advisory body; the second, an executive body. Following is the decision of the Council,

“The Church has suffered much from schism because of the absence of power to resist the absolute authority of the metropolitans of Malabar. Therefore, the establishment of the mentioned committee is most necessary. And since it is difficult for the members to manage matters collectively, it is recommended that an administrative committee should be established consisting of eight priests who attended the Council and sixteen laymen of the first rank. Metropolitan Joseph shall be the chairman of this committee.”

Metropolitan Joseph was appointed a Metropolitan of Malabar and the first chairman of said committee.

The Council further resolved that public properties should be administered by three stewards to be elected by the first committee which consists of the delegates of the entire church. One of these is the Metropolitan of Malabar acting as a chairman, the second a priest and the third a layman. It was also decided that the treasury of the seminary should have three keys, one for each steward. It was further decided that if the stewards disagreed on an issue, it should then be resolved by majority rule. Finally, the Council decided to divide the church into dioceses each headed by a metropolitan ordained by the patriarch.

On June 30, 1876, members of the Council submitted a petition to Patriarch Peter. After giving a brief account of the history of the church of Malabar from the year 52 A.D., the time of St. Thomas, until the convention of the Council, they said that, they have attended the Council to confirm the orthodox faith and the supremacy of the Apostolic See. They

thanked this See for its labor and caring for them since the early centuries and the huge funds it remitted to them in order to rescue them from their fall. They also thanked the Apostolic See for sending them metropolitans who brought them the Holy Chrism and confirmed them in the faith. They also built many churches and suffered hardships on their account. They especially thanked the patriarch for enduring hardship in their behalf. They promised that all these contributions would never be blotted out from their hearts or the hearts of their sons forever. They admitted that, since the early centuries, their diocese and their entire churches and congregations were subject to the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch and no one else. They further resolved that the patriarch alone has the authority to grant ordination of their metropolitans and priests and appoint them or remove them from office. They further promised that they and their sons would maintain the faith instituted by the first Three Councils<sup>712</sup> without deviation until the last breath, even forever. They supported their pledge by swearing on the authority of the patriarch, the Cross and the Holy Gospel. They appealed to the patriarch to furnish them with canons and rules relating to the faith and church practices. They wanted him to confirm the regulations they have already set for the church. They appealed to the patriarch to send them a deputy metropolitan to keep watch on their deed lest they waver from the true path. The patriarch endorsed the Council's decisions and with this, it was closed. After the Council ended, the patriarch addressed a letter to the maharaja of Travancore informing him of the meeting of the Council and the Syrian delegates who attended it from the south and the north. He said that of these delegates twenty-four were appointed stewards, twelve from the southern region and twelve from the northern region. They were instructed to appoint an attorney to follow up the cases of the churches and their usurped prosperities in the courts. The patriarch further informed the maharaja that the Council elected eighty members: forty from the south and forty for the north to assist the former members on necessary issues. These men have gained the trust of the community and the confirmation of the patriarch. To this letter was attached a list of the names of the two committees previously mentioned.

## **CHAPTER SIXTEEN: PATRIARCH PETER DIVIDES THE CHURCH OF MALABAR INTO SEVEN DIOCESES AND ORDAINS**

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<sup>712</sup> These are the Council of Nicaea, 325 A. D., the Council of Constantinople, 381 A. D., and the Council of Ephesus, 431 A. D. TRANS.

### METROPOLITANS FOR EACH ONE OF THEM

In the fall of 1876, the patriarch addressed letters to the prime ministers of Travancore and Cochin inquiring about the number of Syrians in their domains. The prime minister of Travancore replied that the Syrians in his domain number 295, 770.<sup>713</sup> Having received this information, the patriarch decided to divide the Syrian churches into dioceses. When he was at Parur in the northern region, he chose competent clergymen worthy of the episcopate. At the beginning of November, 1876, he ordained Athanasius Bulus (Paul) a metropolitan for the Kollam Diocese and the churches in the eastern region, and Julius Gurgis for the diocese of Thompon and the neighboring churches. On November 28, he ordained Gregorius Gurgis a metropolitan for the diocese of Niranam and the neighboring churches, and Cyril Gurgis a metropolitan for the diocese of Angamali and the neighboring churches. He wrote to the maharaja of Travancore saying that he acted this way because it is difficult for one metropolitan, or even two, to administer a congregation of three hundred thousand souls, let alone those in Cochin as the prime minister had informed him.<sup>714</sup> Also, the patriarch added three more dioceses. They are the dioceses of Cochin, Kottayam and Kandanad. On May 5, 1877, he ordained two more metropolitans: Iyawannis Bulus for the diocese of Kandanad and Dionysius Simon for the diocese of Cochin. He transferred Athanasius Bulus from Kollam to the diocese of Kottayam and appointed Joseph for the latter diocese.<sup>715</sup>

Each of these six metropolitans submitted a document to the civil courts recognizing the spiritual and secular authority of the See of Antioch over the church of Malabar. They promised that they would never deviate from the orthodox faith or challenge the supremacy of the Apostolic See. Each of the metropolitans agreed that if he was discharged by the patriarch, he would also be considered as discharged by the government. The metropolitans also pledged to collect the patriarchal tithes and deliver them to the Apostolic See.

The patriarch provided each of the metropolitans with a *systatikon* (letter of commendation) instructing him to minister to his diocese alone. He is to do this according to God's will and without interfering in the affairs of other dioceses. The purpose was to prevent conflict in the church. He also

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<sup>713</sup> See the patriarch's two letters to the prime minister of Cochin the first dated October 28, and the second November 18, 1876.

<sup>714</sup> See the patriarch's letter from Cochin dated December, 1876.

<sup>715</sup> See the patriarch's letter dated May 3, 1877.



provided each of them with a certificate addressed to the maharaja, the prime minister and the British Resident. The purpose was that these officials should regard him a lawful metropolitan of the diocese for which he was ordained as stated in the *systatikon*. The patriarch explained saying, "After deep thought, I have chosen competent men to be metropolitans."<sup>716</sup>

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: PATRIARCH PETER SAILS HOME

Patriarch Peter spent two years in Malabar engaged in constant wearisome travels despite his old age.<sup>717</sup> His main purpose was to insure the welfare of the church. After having the royal decree granted the excommunicated Matta annulled, the patriarch went on visiting the Syrian churches. He endeavored, as much as he could, to reform the clergy and eliminate objectionable customs practiced by the Syrians. He ordered those who desired the priesthood to marry before their ordination with the exception of two unmarried priests for each diocese. Even in this case, these prospective priests should not be ordained unless they are thirty years old.

On the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on August 15, 1876, the patriarch consecrated the Holy Chrism in the church of Mulanthuruthi. He had many churches built and consecrated. He ordained two monks, three Chorepiscopi, sixteen priests and seventeen deacons not to mention the six metropolitans he ordained as said before. He united the people and won back to the church most of those who supported the excommunicated Matta. The Syrians considered him their savior. They were tremendously happy for being with them. They appreciated the assistance they received through him. In brief, any fair person will realize that by his apostolic accomplishments in Malabar, Patriarch Peter has fought the good fight and, by God's help, won for himself a noble name inscribed in gold on the forehead of the Syrian Church of Malabar. Tongues will ever praise our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who aided this great father in achieving his goals. This is not astonishing since Patriarch Peter was humble, a devout believer and well known for his compassionate love of the Syrian Church and community. In fact, he left a memory worthy of a true church shepherd. He departed Malabar indebted to Dionysius Joseph one thousand and

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<sup>716</sup> See the patriarch's letter sent from Constantinople dated May 25, 1878.

<sup>717</sup> He fell sick in Malabar and was treated by the English physician White. See his letter to White dated August 1, 1875.

eight hundred rupees. He was also indebted three thousand rupees to the notables Curien and Ipur.<sup>718</sup>

On May 16, 1877, the patriarch sailed from Bombay bound for Jerusalem. He carried gold and silver presents from the church of Malabar including a big golden cross offered as a gift by the church of Knadanat. It was worth five thousand rupees.<sup>719</sup> It is still preserved in the Patriarchal Office. The historian of Malabar, Philip Edavazhikal, had this to say about him:

“Before the advent of the Patriarch of the Jacobite Church<sup>720</sup> the country seemed destined to disappear altogether. Yet, within the space of less than two years, he (patriarch Peter) was able to rebuild the old edifice on stronger, broader and deeper foundations. He was a stranger to the country and customs. He did not know a word of English. When he set out upon his memorable journey, he had not been aware of any human agency to guide and support him. And yet, single handed, he overcome all obstacles. He had a volcanic presence which he achieved in the face of the well-nigh insurmountable difficulties that confronted him on every side; his was the greatest personality that ever crossed the stage of Syrian history within historic times. Though it is now more than quarter of a century since he departed this life, his visit and the incidents connected with it are as fresh and vivid in the minds of the people as if they had occurred only yesterday. Surely, so long as the Syrian Church in Malabar lasts, aye, and longer far, will endure the name and fame of His Holiness Mor Ignatius Peter III, Patriarch of Antioch.”<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> See the patriarch's letter sent from Constantinople dated May 25, 1878.

<sup>719</sup> See the journey of priest 'Abd al-Ahad of Ba'shiqa to Malabar.

<sup>720</sup> E. M. Philip Edavazhikal uses the term “Jacobite Church.” The author, Severus Jacob Tuma, later Patriarch Ignatius Jacob III, rightfully detests the term Jacobite since it was used in a derogatory connotation by the Chalcedonian opponents of the Syrian Church. He rightfully uses the term Syrian Orthodox instead. The Syrians of Malabar used the term Jacobite as a separate identity in order to escape the tyranny of the Portuguese clergymen who tried to subjugate them to the Church of Rome. TRANS.

<sup>721</sup> See E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 209–210. The author gives p. 234 for this quotation, but does not identify the version he used. It should be noted that Patriarch Peter was not Peter III, but Peter IV. TRANS.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH OF MALABAR AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF PATRIARCH PETER

The excommunicated Matta longed to meet Patriarch Peter, kiss his hand and pay him homage and repent. The patriarch himself anticipated his repentance. But some of his selfish followers prevented him from doing so. Having been despaired of Matta's repentance, the patriarch reaffirmed his excommunication. The seminary and its properties remained in Matta's hands until his death on July 3, 1877. It is reported that he died from a mouse's bite. His cousin, Athanasius Tuma, who succeeded him, seized the seminary and its properties. He oppressed the Syrians following the advice of the English (Anglicans). He was supported by the priests who were Matta's partisans. The courts of Travancore issued a judgment concerning the churches, where some of Matta's followers lived. It resolved that both groups (those of the patriarch and of Matta) should serve in the churches for one week alternately. Of these were the churches of Niranam, Thompon, Omalloor, Rani, Puthencave, Mavelikara, Kozenchery and Kloppera. As to the small church of Kottayam, the courts issued a decision in favor of Matta's group because the judge of Alleppy was biased toward it. The rebellious Alexander ousted the Syrian congregation from this church who went to worship in the new church of Kottayam. God, however, took revenge of the enemies of the Syrian church. Henry Baker, Matta's friend, died from a noxious disease. The former Resident Bollard in Travancore, who assisted Matta in Madras, was inflicted with terminal disease. He quit his position and fled to London. The Syrians heaved a sigh of relief for his departure. They were especially gratified that the prime minister was a fair man since he was a governor of Trivandrum and became acquainted with the patriarch in that city.

Meantime, the metropolitans of the Apostolic See exerted commendable efforts in the cause of the church. Metropolitan Gregorius Gurgis opened a seminary in Paramalla in which were enrolled twenty-five deacons and more than thirty students to study Syriac and church sciences. Julius Gurgis, metropolitan of Thompon, returned to his village of Pampakoda because of sickness. He bought a press and printed service Syriac books. Dionysius Joseph was paralyzed in the hand and could not celebrate the Holy Eucharist for eight months. On March 4, 1879, he filed a suit at Alleppy court against Matta's successor demanding confirmation of his authority over the church of Malabar. He predicated his case on the premise that he was ordained by the Patriarch of Antioch and that the community has accepted him as such. The suit lasted ten years until 1889, when the Appellate Court issued its decision. The court consisted of three judges: two

Brahmins and Ormsby, an Englishman. The verdict was two to one. Ormsby resolved that “The Syrian Church of India, after separating from the Church of Rome in 1653, received the episcopate from the Patriarch of Antioch in 1665. But it remained independent and its bishops continued to ordain other bishops to succeed them. Ormsby reasoned that the permission of the patriarch was not necessary for the legality of these ordinations or for the episcopal succession. Therefore, the case of the plaintiff is void.”

On the contrary, the two Brahmin judges resolved that “This church was subject to the Patriarch of Antioch who is the only authority to ordain bishops for the Syrian Church of Travancore, either personally or through his deputies. Since Dionysius Joseph was ordained by the authority of the patriarch, let alone he was admitted by majority vote to the council convened in Mulanthuruthi in 1876, he has the right to control the seminary and its properties at Kottayam.” Consequently, Athanasius Tuma and his cohorts were ousted from the seminary and Dionysius entered it with a great pageant.<sup>722</sup>

Other suits filed in other towns where churches were in the hands of the seceders, were settled by verdicts in favor of the Syrians. Eventually, all the churches controlled by the adversaries were reprieved except the church of Mairaman, Matta’s village where he was buried, which was willingly surrendered by Dionysius Joseph to Matta’s partisans.

## **CHAPTER NINETEEN: THE ORDINATION OF METROPOLITAN ATHANASIOUS SHIM’UN (SIMON) AS PATRIARCHAL DEPUTY**

Simon was son of ‘Abd Allah born in the village of Isphes at the beginning of the second decade of the nineteenth century. He became a monk at the Za’faran Monastery and was ordained a priest shortly before 1840. In 1848, he accompanied Athanasius Stephen to Malabar and reached Cochin on February 3, 1849. He returned to the Resident of the Apostolic See (the Za’faran Monastery) in 1855. For a time, he ministered to the church in Damascus. In 1880, when Patriarch Peter IV was in Constantinople endeavoring to build the church of the Virgin, he received letters from Dionysius Joseph and Gregorius Gurgis informing him of the disturbances in the church of Malabar. Saddened by the news, the patriarch left Constantinople on August 22 bound for Homs reaching it on September 5. By God’s grace, he chose the monk Simon and ordained him a metropolitan on September 14. He called him Athanasius at his ordination and provided him with a

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<sup>722</sup> *Travancore State Manuel*, 2, 218.

*systaticon*.<sup>723</sup> He delegated him to Malabar along with the deacon Saliba Bushairy. They reached Cochin on January 1, 1881.

Athanasius Simon shared the hardships the metropolitans of Malabar suffered caused by the adversaries. Their strife was crowned by success as they repossessed the seminary at Kottayam in 1889. Shim'un resided at the seminary until his death on June 11, 1889. His body was transported with pomp to the church of Kottayam and buried in its porch. He is still commemorated annually.

In his memoirs, the late Metropolitan Severus Gurgis the Canaanite who knew Simon well, said that he was a good man, loyal, loving and free from greed or anger. He preserved the trust given him with loyalty although he was not highly learned or competent in administration. Awgen (Eugene) said of him that, "Regarding learning and administration Simon was simple. But he was gracious and meek. He never interfered in administrative matters. He was venerable and loved by the metropolitans and their congregations."

Simon knew Syriac well in which he penned some letters. His seal in the Arabic language read thus, "The slave of the compassionate Lord, Metropolitan Simon."

## **CHAPTER TWENTY: JULIUS GURGIS, METROPOLITAN OF THOMPON, DIONYSIUS SIMON, METROPOLITAN OF COCHIN AND CYRIL GURGIS, METROPOLITAN OF ANGAMALI**

### **Julius Gurgis**

Julius was son of Matta of the Konat family. He was born in Pampakoda in the second decade of the nineteenth century and studied the Syriac language and church sciences under his father's cousin the renowned learned priest Abraham Konat. In 1850, he was ordained a celibate priest for the church of St. John in Pampakoda. He corresponded with clergymen in Malabar and Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) about religious matters and the condition of the church of Malabar. On September 30, 1850, the priest Philip Edavazhikal mentioned him in the letter he addressed to Patriarch Jacob II. He asked the patriarch to delegate a maphryono to Malabar who would ordain the priest Gurgis, priest of the church of Pampakoda, a metropolitan. The reason is that Gurgis was zealous for the orthodox faith. Philip advised that

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<sup>723</sup> See a copy of the *systaticon* at the Metropolitan Library of Mosul.

both the maphryono and Gurgis should reside in a church of their choice. They should set up chorepiscopi and deputies in the entire churches of Malabar.

On August 12, 1868, Gurgis addressed a letter to the monk-priest Joseph in St. Matthew's Monastery inquiring about the succession of the patriarchs of Antioch, the division of ancient Christians into denominations, and the chroniclers of some martyrs and saints. On November 1, 1870, he addressed a joint letter with the priest Philip Edavazhikal to Patriarch Jacob II, appealing to him to send a venerable and learned monk to Malabar to continue the teaching of religious sciences. They pledged to pay for his expenses and living.

For some time, Gurgis taught the clergy the Syriac language and religious sciences. On November 1, 1876, Patriarch Peter IV, ordained him a metropolitan for the Thompon diocese. Soon, however, he became afflicted with a disease. For a short time, he went to Pampakoda where he bought a press and printed Syriac ritual books. In 1884, he passed away and was buried in the cemetery of his family. Gurgis knew Syriac well in which he composed some letters and church hymns.

### **Dionysius Shim'un (Simon)**

Dionysius Simon of the family of Karoot, was born in Kandanad. He was ordained a celibate priest for the church of Kandanad. On May 15, 1877, Patriarch Peter ordained him a metropolitan for the Cochin diocese. Shortly afterwards, his diocese rejected him and he moved to the village of Torní where he built a church and resided in it until his death in 1886. He was buried in this church.

### **Cyril Gurgis**

Cyril Gurgis of the family of Ampat, was born in Angamali. He was ordained a celibate priest. He was adept in administrative matters. On November 28, 1876, Patriarch Peter ordained him a metropolitan for the Angamali diocese. Cyril bought a piece of land in Alway to build a bishopric on it. When the building was completed, he fell ill and died from asthma in April, 1893.<sup>724</sup> He was buried in the church of Angamali.

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<sup>724</sup> It is also said that he died before 1891.



## **PART SIX: THE CHURCH OF MALABAR IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

### **CHAPTER ONE: GREGORIUS GURGIS, METROPOLITAN OF NIRANAM AND ATHANASIUS PAUL, METROPOLITAN OF KOTTAYAM**

#### **Gregorius Gurgis**

Gregorius Gurgis, of the family of Chatorti, was born in Mulanthuruthi. He studied Syriac and religious sciences under the priest Gurgis Konat (later Metropolitan Julius Gurgis). He was ordained as a celibate priest for the church of Mulanthuruthi. While still young, he shunned world pleasures and was invested with the monastic habit by Dionysius Joseph.<sup>725</sup> He entered the Monastery of Vaitekal. On May 2, 1870, the priest Abraham mentioned him in his letter to the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal. He said that, “He himself is now residing with the monk Gurgis in order to have his heart illuminated with spiritual learning.” He went on to say that, “Gurgis was a humble monk who collected funds to build an asylum for strangers.” He also sought Philip’s advice regarding the construction of the monastery and its attachments.

Gurgis was also mentioned by his namesake the priest Gurgis of Konat from Pampakoda in his letter addressed to the aforementioned Chorepiscopus Philip on April 27, 1872. He said that, “Gurgis has willingly shunned the world and persevered in prayer.” When Patriarch Peter was in Malabar, Gurgis accompanied him as an interpreter and secretary. For his virtue and competence, the patriarch ordained him a metropolitan for the Niranam diocese on November 28, 1876. Following the death of his teacher Julius Gurgis, our Gurgis was entrusted with the administration of the dio-

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<sup>725</sup> See the letter of the priest Gurgis Konat to the Chorepiscopus Philip dated April 27, 1872.



ceses of Thompon and Kollam. For some time, he became the Patriarchal Deputy in Malabar.<sup>726</sup>

In 1895, Gregorius Gurgis visited Jerusalem accompanied by the monk Paul of the Potheakatel family and the two priests, Gurgis, the teacher (Vadassery), Luke, and the deacon Saliba Bushairy. He brought with him a big silver cross as a gift for St. Mark's Monastery. He was welcomed by the metropolitan of Jerusalem. After visiting the Holy Sepulcher and other religious places, Gurgis returned to Malabar. He built a metropolitan residence on the land at Paramalla which was formerly bought by Dionysius Joseph. After administrating his diocese with competence, Gurgis passed away on October 20, 1902 and was buried in Paramalla on the tract on which Dionysius Joseph purchased for the same purpose. Visitors still visit his grave on his memorial day to receive blessings. Some of them even were healed from maladies.

Gregorius Gurgis opened a seminary in Paramalla to educate clergymen in the Syriac language and religious sciences. On July 17, 1899, he participated, by the patriarch's order, in the ordination of Julius Antonius Elovwaris, Latin metropolitan of Ceylon, Goa and south Kanra. The reason is that the Latin metropolitan and a few thousand Catholic parishioners joined the Syrian Orthodox Church at the end of 1888.<sup>727</sup> He clothed the priests Paul Potheakatel, Fannus Kaleserry and Paul Penadat with the monastic habit and ordained a number of deacons.

### Athanasius Paul

Athanasius Paul was born in Parur of the north. He belonged to the family of Kadovel. He became well versed in the Syriac language, religious sciences and homiletics. He was ordained as a celibate priest for the church of Parur. Matta Belayar appointed him a teacher at the seminary in Kottayam where many clergymen studied under him. He persevered in reading religious books and practiced virtuous and godly life of devotion. Once he rebuked Matta when he saw him intoxicated with wine. When Patriarch Peter came

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<sup>726</sup> See the letter of priest 'Abd al-Ahad of Ba'shiqa to Malabar.

<sup>727</sup> In 1897, a person named Yuhanna Nuri used arbitrarily the title of "Ecumenical Patriarch of Malabar" and established, falsely, a Roman Catholic Patriarchal See. When the Catholic Chaldeans learned of his deception, they expelled him a few months later. They ripped his hair and beard. He fled to Damascus for refuge and died in that city on January 31, 1899. See Philip Tarrazi, *A Historical Tract on the Patriarchates*.

to Malabar he served as his interpreter. For his learning and administrative ability, the patriarch ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Kollam and the churches of the east on November 1, 1876. In the next year he transferred him to the diocese of Kottayam. After the death of his friend Metropolitan Cyril Gurgis, he was entrusted with the diocese of Angamali too. He succeeded in constructing a bishopric in Alway assisted by the monk Paul Penat. He was also made the Patriarchal Deputy in Malabar.<sup>728</sup>

Athanasius Paul penned some books. He translated some books of the scriptures including the Psalms into Malayalam and had them published. He sold some of the properties of the seminary in Alway and bought agricultural land which yielded the seminary a substantial yearly income. He partook in the ordination of Antonius Elowaris, Latin metropolitan of Ceylon, Goa and south Kanra. He invested the deacon Gurgis of Vakatanum the monastic habit and ordained several deacons and priests. On October 20, 1907, Athanasius Paul passed away an old man and was buried in the Alway chapel.

## **Chapter Two: Patriarch ‘Abd Allah II Ordains Two Metropolitans for Malabar**

At the end of 1903, Patriarch ‘Abd al-Masih II was inflicted with a mental disease. The bishops removed him from the Apostolic See and appointed Metropolitan Behnam Samarchi of Mosul a Patriarchal Deputy in January, 1905. Dionysius Joseph, metropolitan of Malabar was informed of the news by a telegram. In the spring of 1906, the deacon Saliba Bushairy and deacon Matta, son of the priest Abraham, left Malabar to visit the Patriarch. They reached Mosul and proceeded to St. Matthew’s Monastery. Metropolitan Elias Qudso, superior of the monastery, invested deacon Saliba with the monastic habit and ordained him a priest. Also, he ordained Matta a full deacon. The two dignitaries, then, proceeded to visit the churches and monasteries of Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia).

On August 15, 1906, Metropolitan Gregorius ‘Abd Allah was consecrated a patriarch as ‘Abd Allah II. The Syrians of Malabar, who knew him when he accompanied Patriarch Peter to their country, welcomed the news with joy. In the next year, Metropolitans Joseph and Iyawannis Paul addressed a letter to the patriarch saying that the church of Malabar is in a dire need for bishops. It was suffering turbulence because some dioceses were vacant, or their bishops were advanced in age. The patriarch replied asking

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<sup>728</sup> See his published biography in the Malayalam language.

the churches of Malabar to send candidates for the episcopate to Jerusalem before Easter. Joseph and Iyawannis Paul addressed letters to the churches of the north and the south in Malabar to send delegates to the forthcoming meeting to be convened at the seminary in Kottayam on February 14, 1908, in order to discuss the election of bishops. At the meeting, the delegates chose the monks Abraham Paul Kocho Parampil, the seminary's principal, and Gurgis Vatachery a teacher at the seminary, to proceed to Jerusalem. They signed the document of their candidacy and sent them along with the candidates to the patriarch. They also delivered with them two letters to the patriarch dated March 9, 1908. One of the letters was signed by the metropolitans Joseph and Iyawannis Paul and stamped with their seals; the other letter was signed by the rest of the delegates. They requested the patriarch to ordain the two monks metropolitans without dioceses and provide them with *systaticons* (letters of commendation). They also requested him to designate one of them, monk Saliba, a deputy for the present metropolitan of Malabar and to be later his successor. They also asked the patriarch to send with the newly ordained metropolitans a quantity of the Holy Chrism upon their return home. Finally, they beseeched the patriarch to ordain monk Saliba a metropolitan and dispatch him to Malabar as his deputy. In fact, the patriarch had already ordained Saliba a metropolitan on March 2, 1908.

The two monks set sail accompanied by the monk Fannus Kalechery, Quryaqos Kodayat, priest of the Tiruvalla church and the deacon Joseph Vanegrat of Kottayam and others. Upon their arrival in Jerusalem, Patriarch 'Abd Allah II, ordained the two monks as metropolitans. He called one Cyril Paul and the other Dionysius Gurgis at their ordination. He provided them with *systaticons*. He also clothed the deacon Matta of Malabar with the monastic habit and changed his name into Awgen. But he refused to designate Gurgis as a deputy and successor to the present metropolitan of Malabar because such action violated the church canons of Malabar. This caused Gurgis to return home displeased. En route homeward, the two metropolitans were accompanied by Eustathius Saliba, the Patriarchal Deputy, and the monk Awgen.

### **Chapter Three: The Accomplishments of Metropolitan Dionysius Joseph of Malabar**

Joseph was born in Kunnamkulam in 1830. Later he was ordained as a celibate priest for the church of Arthat. On April 18, 1865, Patriarch Jacob II ordained him a metropolitan at the church of the Virgin in Amid. Upon his return to Malabar, he opposed the excommunicated Matta. When he failed, he appealed to Patriarch Peter IV, who journeyed to London and then to

Malabar, to rescue the church from Matta's clutches. But Dionysius Joseph was not entirely loyal to the patriarch who suspended him from service before he left Malabar. Joseph, however, followed the patriarch to Bombay offering his submission. The patriarch absolved him from the anathema. Also, he appointed him a chairman of the committee and a metropolitan of Malabar. Joseph successfully continued to oppose Matta's followers. He restored teaching into the seminary by the effort of the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat, the malphono (supreme teacher) of Malabar and the priest Gurgis Vattechery. Also, he established two high schools: one in Kottayam named after Mar Dionysius; the other in Tiruvalla named after Mar Gregorius Gurgis. At present, the enrollment of each one of these schools is about seven hundred students. He also supported the construction of the church in Trivandrum and the seminary at Kottayam. Furthermore, he took care of the priest Antonius Elowaris and his Catholic followers in Ceylon, Goa and south Kanra who embraced the Orthodox faith in 1888.

On September 20, 1895, the priest 'Abd al-Ahad of Ba'shiqa and the half-deacon 'Abd al-Karim Sidah of Mosul, journeyed to Malabar carrying a proclamation from Patriarch 'Abd al-Masih II. The patriarch authorized them to collect funds for the construction of the Church of the Virgin which was in the process of being built in the Qal'a district of Mosul. The two men toured the dioceses of Malabar and collected an amount of hundred gold liras not counting their expenses. According to the priest 'Abd al-Ahad there were two hundred churches and four hundred priests in Malabar. He was greatly honored by Dionysius Joseph who was a friend of his father, the priest Gurgis, and was accompanied by Joseph on his visit to many churches. Likewise, 'Abd al-Ahad was loved and honored by the metropolitans and other clergymen for his knowledge of the Syriac language.

Dionysius Joseph was delighted by the ordination of Patriarch 'Abd Allah II to this eminent position because he was his dear friend. He was the one who dispatched the two monks Paul and Gurgis to the patriarch to be ordained metropolitans. Joseph was quite famous. The church of Malabar celebrated his sixtieth jubilee. In 1909, he suffered from an incurable boil in the back of the head whose treatment defied Indian and English physicians. He passed away on June 29, 1909, at the church of Kottayam. His body was taken to the seminary in great pomp and buried next to his father's cousin, Dionysius II who founded the seminary. The late priest Jacob Saka of Bartulli (d. 1931) eulogized him in a Sarugite (twelve-meter) Syriac ode

Metropolitan Joseph was an able and far-sighted administrator. He was of splendid appearance. He was very ambitious to obtain the sublime dignity of the maphrianate. Also, he had a tendency to make the church of

Malabar independent of the Apostolic See of Antioch. However, his arbitrary administration of the church broadened the gap between Patriarch Peter IV and the rebellious Matta. In fact, he is considered as the one who initiated what came to be known as the “Malabar Question.”

#### **Chapter Four: Patriarch ‘Abd Allah II’s Visit to Malabar and His Accomplishments in That Country**

In 1908, Patriarch ‘Abd Allah II desired to visit Malabar and explore the affairs of the church in that country. He sailed for London accompanied by the two monks Yuhanna ‘Abachi and Elias Qoro. He had an audience with King Edward VII who presented him with a gold decoration. He also visited the Minister of Indian Affairs who provided him with recommendations to the British government of India.

In October, 1909, the patriarch sailed for India. Upon his arrival in Kottayam and its seminary, he was received with an extraordinary welcome. He visited the maharajas of Travancore and Cochin and was presented by each of them with a golden decoration. He went on to visit the Syrian churches.

Dionysius Joseph passed away when the patriarch was still in London. Dionysius Gurgis sent him a telegram to issue an order appointing him a metropolitan of Malabar. The patriarch sent a telegram to his deputy, Eustathius Saliba, inquiring about the person whom the clergy and laymen of Malabar have chosen to be their metropolitan. Saliba replied that the person was Dionysius Gurgis. Based on this information, the patriarch issued an order appointing him a metropolitan of Malabar.

When the patriarch arrived in Malabar, Dionysius Gurgis accompanied him on his visit to two churches only. But he parted the patriarch’s company at the church of Puthupally because of his evil intentions. But the patriarch continued his apostolic tour and did a commendable work.

On May 27, 1910, Ascension Day, the patriarch ordained the monk Paul Penadat a metropolitan at the church of Agbaramp for the diocese of Angamali and called him Athanasius at his ordination. Also, he added to the already existing seven dioceses, the diocese of the Canaanites. The Canaanites’ diocese actually included the entire Canaanite churches which were spread out over three dioceses. On August 15, The Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, he ordained the priest Gurgis Edavazhikal a metropolitan at the Vadikara church and named him Severus at his ordination. In 1911, he suspended Paul, metropolitan of the Kandanad diocese, because of old age, bad hearing and maladministration in response to his congregation’s request.

After visiting several churches, the patriarch returned to the seminary at Kottayam. In May, 1911, he convened a council at the seminary in Alway and suspended Dionysius Gurgis for his continuous rebellion and disobedience. On August 6, Transfiguration Day, he consecrated the Holy Chrism at the church of St. Thomas in Mulanthuruthi. On August 17, he convened a council at Alway attended by the delegates of many churches except those supporting Dionysius Gurgis. The patriarch enacted some canons for the church of Malabar. He also installed Cyril Paul a metropolitan of Malabar instead of Gurgis. He was assisted by the Chorepiscopus Matta Konat and the notable Kurien (Curien), son of Yuhanna of Kottayam.

In this same year, the patriarch left the seminary at Alway for Homs and then Jerusalem. He passed away on the night of November 26, 1915, and was buried in St. Mark's Monastery. He was characterized by wisdom and patience. After his departure from Malabar, the Syrians filed a suit in the civil courts to restore the seminary at Kottayam and the properties under its control.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CYRIL, METROPOLITAN OF MALABAR, SEVERUS GURGIS, METROPOLITAN OF THE CANAANITES**

### **Cyril Paul**

Cyril Paul was born in Mulanthuruthi to the Toipaten-Kochoparampil family. Since youth he was inclined toward the priesthood. He was ordained a deacon and then a celibate priest for the churches of Mulanthuruthi and Kandanad. Because of his tendency toward monastic life, Patriarch Peter IV invested him with the monastic habit at the Monastery of Vaitekal where the monk Gurgis Chatorti (later Metropolitan Gregorius of Niranam) was worshipping. Shortly afterwards Cyril was appointed an abbot of this monastery which he promoted. Metropolitan Dionysius Joseph appointed him a principal of the seminary at Kottayam. He exerted commendable effort to build its chapel, revive its press and reuse its fields. He was also concerned for the construction of the church at the capital, Trivandrum.

In 1908, the Syrians of Malabar chose him as their metropolitan. They delegated him to Patriarch 'Abd Allah II who ordained him a metropolitan at St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem. In August 1911, the patriarch appointed him as the metropolitan of Malabar after suspending Metropolitan Dionysius Gurgis. He also entrusted him with the diocese of Kandanad following the retirement of its metropolitan Iyawannis Gurgis. Cyril Paul built a bishop's residence in Parum and bought fields for the diocese. He filed a suit in the Travancore civil courts against Gurgis to retrieve the se-

minary and its properties which were still in Gurgis's control. On December 1, 1917, he passed away and was buried in the church of Pampadi.

Cyril Paul, may God be gracious to him, was pious, honest and persevered in prayer and fasting.

### **Severus Gurgis**

Severus Gurgis was the youngest of the children of Philip Edavazhikal. He was born in Kottayam on November 14, 1851. In 1862, Cyril Joakim ordained him a deacon. In 1875, Dionysius Joseph ordained him a priest for the ancient church of Kottayam. He addressed a letter to Patriarch Peter IV informing him of his ordination and asking for his blessing. The patriarch replied on July 14, 1875, while he was at Trivandrum, telling him to be devout, wise, active, humble, and like his forefather, adherent to the orthodox faith from which he should not waver.

Severus Gurgis was appointed a general representative of the Canaanite churches. In these churches, he found priests and laymen who still supported the excommunicated Matta. He exerted commendable effort to win them back to the fold of the church after ordaining them according to church canons. He also made an effort to rebuild his vicarage and adding to it new rooms with the aid of his nephews the priest Luke and Mr. Philip.

In 1910, Patriarch 'Abd Allah II established the Canaanite diocese including the entire Canaanite churches. These churches were formerly scattered over three dioceses administered by a deputy elected by the Canaanite Council and confirmed by the metropolitans of the three dioceses. The patriarch invested Gurgis with the monastic habit at the church of Pampakoda. On August 15, the Assumption Day of the Virgin, he ordained him a metropolitan for the Canaanite diocese and named him Severus at his ordination.

Severus Gurgis felt deep concern for spiritual and mundane matters of the church. He reorganized the old Canaanite Council to include representatives of the entire churches within the diocese. This caused the number of churches to increase. He ordained for them priests and deacons. He also organized a body to evangelize the Indian heathens for which he established four new centers in addition to the two old ones. He founded a center for the new diocese named after St. Ephraim in Chengonam. It consisted of two stories of modern style. He also established an English high school in the name of St. Severus of Antioch in Rani. Finally, he set up a committee to collect annual funds for the assistance of some priests, poor seminarians and laymen to help them continue their high school education.

Upon the death of his nephew and right hand the renowned writer E. M. Philip,<sup>729</sup> Severus, who was burdened with old age and illness, tried to find a successor. Together with the Syrian community, he chose the priest Abraham Thamrapallil, priest of the Kaleserry church to be ordained a bishop. He addressed a letter on September 23, 1914 to Patriarch ‘Abd Allah II requesting his permission to ordain Abraham a metropolitan with the assistance of two more bishops. The patriarch did not respond. In 1926, he and the diocese, nominated the priest Tuma, son of Quryaqos Ottatikal of Pallam Dodastipal and sent him to Patriarch Elias III (d.1932). The patriarch ordained him a metropolitan at St. Mark’s Monastery and named him Dioscorus at his ordination. He succeeded Severus Gurgis who passed away in peace on June 11, 1927 and was buried in the great church of Kottayam which he served since his youth.

### **Chapter Six: Julius Antonius Francisco Xavier Elowaris**

He is Antonius Francisco Xavier son of Joseph Baptista Elowaris. He was born in the village of Virana in Celsit in the island of Goa. He grew up in the Roman faith and the Latin rite. He studied priestly science in their school and was ordained a priest. He spoke Portuguese.

In the fall of 1888, he and another priest and a host of parishioners from Ceylon, Goa, and especially from the city of Colombo, where they had many churches, joined the Syrian Orthodox Church. After instructing Antonius with the orthodox faith and praying for him, Dionysius Joseph permitted him to practice sacerdotal services. Antonius returned to Goa and entered the Church of the Virgin unheeding the Latins’ anathema against him. The Syrian orthodox metropolitans of Malabar and Antonius’s follow-

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<sup>729</sup> E. M. Philips was son of Matthew, son of the famous Philip Eadavazhikal. He was proficient in the Syriac, English and the Malayalam languages. His studied church jurisprudence and civil law and was associated with Dionysius Joseph, metropolitan of Malabar. He became a secretary of the General Council of the Church of Malabar and editor of the church magazine in Malayalam. He penned in Malayalam many religious and polemical books defending the Orthodox faith. He wrote in English the history of the church in Malayalam entitled *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, which his son, attorney Matthew, translated and published in Malayalam. He was a competent administrator, religiously zealous, far sighted and of sound reasoning and persuasion. However, he was a little selfish. Philip labored hard in the vineyard of the church. He was the right hand of Dionysius Joseph in his struggle against church adversaries. After a very fruitful life, he passed away on August 14, 1914.



ers informed Patriarch Peter IV of Antonius's anathema requesting him to ordain a metropolitan for them. The patriarch told the metropolitans to investigate Antonius's case. If they become sure of the orthodoxy of his faith, they should ordain him a metropolitan with the name of Julius. On July 15, 1889, Metropolitan Gregorius of Niranam invested Antonius with the monastic habit. On July 17, he and Metropolitans Athanasius Paul and Iyawannis Paul, ordained him a metropolitan for Ceylon and Goa at the church of St. Thomas in Kottayam.

Apart from the *systaticon* handed to him, Antonius wrote down in his own hand a *homologia* (confession of faith), on August 3. He pledged his obedience and firmness in the faith.

The Latins began oppressing Antonius but without avail. When he published articles in a magazine berating their cruelty, they set an ambush capturing him on July 24, 1895. They cast him into a tight and dingy prison. Twenty hours later, they took him to court, but the judge ordered his release. Again, the Latins arrested him and delivered him to the courts. But he defended himself vigorously to the shame of his opponents. Meantime, a crowd of city people supported him and sent a telegram to the king of Portugal who bailed him out for two thousand rupees. Once released, Antonius began writing against the Latins who became more chagrined against him than ever. For safety, Antonius left for Colombo. He wrote a book on the general monarchy. The main persecutor of Antonius was the Portuguese Sebastes Valianty who styled himself a patriarch of Goa. On May 7, 1898, Antonius came to Malabar and then journeyed to the southern region of Bombay then under British rule. A vehement conflict ensued between him and his opponents regarding the ownership of churches with the result that only few churches remained in his control. In 1911, he joined the schismatic Metropolitan Gurgis Vattachery which caused Patriarch 'Abd Allah II to excommunicate him. He died in 1922.

At the beginning of the summer of 1937, two priests, Jirjis and Yuhanna and their congregation of Roman Catholic faith in Honavar near Bombay, joined the Syrian Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Julius Qoro, Patriarchal Deputy to Malabar, sent a delegation of two monk-priests, one of whom was 'Abd al-Ahad Tuma author of this book, and a man of letters named Thomas Matthew to examine their case. The metropolitan summoned the priests unto him and instructed them with the principles of the orthodox faith. He accepted them in accordance with the rite and canons of the holy church. He ordained the priest Jirjis, who was skillful in religious science and author of books, a Chorepiscopus. He sent them back to labor in the diocese of Julius Elowaris. They established a church in the city of

Mangalor. They also had in Honavar a pleasant church building and an orphanage accommodating thirty-six pupils. They persevered in disseminating the orthodox faith in Bombay, Honavar, Brahmavar and Mangalor among the people who numbered five thousand souls.

In September of the same year (1937), the priest Elowaris, nephew of Antonius Elowaris, along with his congregation and the congregation of Colombo in Ceylon joined the Syrian Orthodox Church.

In the diocese of Julius Antonius, flourished the priest Nirona of the church of the Virgin in Brahmavar. He was pious and zealous for the orthodox faith.

### **CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CHOREPISCOPUS MATTA KONAT, MALPHONO (SUPREME TEACHER) OF MALABAR**

Chorepiscopus Matta of the Konat family was born in Pampakoda in 1860. He studied under his uncle Julius Gurgis, metropolitan of the diocese of Thompon and other relatives. He became proficient in the Syriac language and theology. In 1883, he was ordained a priest. When Dionysius Joseph retrieved the seminary at Kottayam, he appointed Matta to teach Syriac and religious sciences in it. A great number of deacons studied under him. For his superior knowledge of the Syriac language, Patriarch Peter IV granted him the title of Malphono (supreme teacher equivalent to a Ph.D. degree). His church chose him as a general steward jointly with Metropolitan Dionysius Joseph and the notable Curien. Upon the death of Metropolitan Joseph in 1909, Dionysius Gurgis arbitrarily controlled the church and its properties. He also rebelled against the authority of the Apostolic See. This caused Matta to leave the seminary scolding Gurgis and his supporters for violating their trust. He defended the Apostolic See with utmost power and zeal. In his press, he published on June, 1915, a Syriac tract on the history of the church of Malabar and the rebellion of Gurgis and his cohorts against the church. He held the position of a general steward until his death.

Upon leaving the seminary at Kottayam, Matta established in his village a seminary which graduated many priests and monks loyal to him. In 1920, the church celebrated his sixtieth jubilee with a great pageant. He was presented with a Syriac copy of *The Commentary on the Gospels* by Bar Salibi, copied by the calligrapher deacon Matta Bulus of Mosul. His loyalists praised in Syriac his sagacity and commendable efforts which he exerted for the cause of the Syrian Church. Matta thanked them in splendid words incorporated in the said commentary.

In 1926, Malphono Konat was ordained a Chorepiscopus. In the next year he was afflicted by a serious disease which defied the physicians. He

passed away in November. His funeral service was conducted by Metropolitan Julius Qoro assisted by the metropolitan of the diocese of Kandanaad and a crowd of priests and deacons, mostly his students. In his funeral procession walked crowds of the Syrian people. He was buried in the cemetery of his family at the Pampakoda church.

Matta Konat, may God be gracious to him, was a proficient learned man. He was pious and zealous who defended the interests of the Apostolic See. But he was weak in administration. He penned in the Malayalam significant books about religious dogmas and church festivities. In Syriac, he penned two treatises on the history of the church of Malabar, a grammar and many letters and tracts on the Syrian Church. They were published in his magazine of *Life Treasure*. He translated from the Syriac into Malayalam sixteen chapters of *The Commentary on the Gospels* by Bar Salibi, seven books of the *Hodooyo (Nomocanon)* by Bar Hebraeus, the entire New Testament except the Book of Revelation. He also translated into the same language a section of church services, *memre* (odes, discourses), a lengthy story of the Mother of God and the stories of the Apostle John and Mar Jirjis the martyr. All of these were published by his private press which is the same as Mar Julius's press. His translation of the New Testament was published by his son the priest Abraham in 1936.

Matta also published in his press, the *shbimo* (Weekday Service Book of Prayer) with a lengthy introduction in Syriac. It contains the order of prayers, festivities, Sundays, and church chorals according to the rite of the Syrian Church. It further contained several liturgies, a lengthy service of deacons, the orders of baptism, marriage, unction, repentance, funeral service of deceased priests and laymen, a service book of major festivals, a service book of Passion Week, a service book of the fasting of Nineveh and a service book of one week of Lent.<sup>730</sup>

## CHAPTER EIGHT: METROPOLITAN EUSTATHIUS SALIBA, PATRIARCHAL DEPUTY TO MALABAR

Saliba was born on January 1, 1854 in the village of Kafarzo in the district of Bushairiyya of the province of Diyarbakir. His father was Salbi and mother, Nabo.<sup>731</sup> He studied under his uncle the priest Denha, the monk

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<sup>730</sup> See Ignatius Aphram Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, transacted by Matti Moosa (Gorgias Press, 2003), 522–523. TRANS.

<sup>731</sup> He had two brothers: Rasho and Dawud (David), and three sisters: Kato (Martha), Miryam and Shmuni.

Barsoum, the priest Aphram, the priest Odo and the monk Simon.<sup>732</sup> He kept contact with Simon who was then serving as a priest in the diocese of Damascus. When Simon was ordained a metropolitan with the name of Athanasius in 1880, he ordained Saliba a deacon and took him in his company to Malabar. The two dignitaries arrived in Cochin on January 1, 1881. Upon Simon's death in 1889, Saliba remained in Malabar evangelizing the Indian heathens and establishing Sunday schools. He also taught deacons the Syriac language and religious sciences and engaged in disputation with the heretics. In 1895, he accompanied Metropolitan Gregorius of Niranam, of blessed memory, to Jerusalem, and then returned to Malabar. In 1906, he journeyed to Mosul and visited St. Matthew's Monastery where Metropolitan Elias Qudso invested him with the monastic habit and ordained him a priest. On March 2, 1908, Patriarch 'Abd Allah II ordained him a metropolitan and delegated him to Malabar as a Patriarchal Deputy. He performed his new positions competently despite the many hardships he faced in the cause of the church. In 1927 he became seriously ill and could no more perform his duties. The office of Patriarchal Deputy was entrusted to Metropolitan Julius Elias Qoro.

In March 1930, while Eustathius Saliba was in Konnamkulam, his condition worsened. He was visited by the Metropolitans Elias Qoro, the Patriarchal Deputy, Athanasius Paul, metropolitan of the dioceses of Angamali and Cochin, Dionysius Mikha'il, metropolitan of the diocese of Kottayam, Dioscorus Tuma, metropolitan of the Canaanite diocese, Timothy Awgen, metropolitan of Kandanad and a number of priests and deacons. The dignitaries looked after Eustathius Saliba, comforted him and tried to alleviate his pain which he endured with astonishing fortitude. He passed away early at night on Wednesday March 20, 1930. Crowds of Syrians from Kunnamkulam rushed to pay him last visit. His funeral service was conducted by the metropolitans and priests. He was eulogized by Metropolitan Dionysius Timothy and was buried in the church of Kunnamkulam. He is commemorated annually by the Syrians who consider him a saint.

Eustathius Saliba, may God be gracious to him, was pious, honest, tender hearted and very zealous in protecting the interest of the Apostolic See. As a good shepherd, he was highly respected for his immaculate and angelical conduct. Many sick people were healed by his prayers. Thousands of heathens were estimated to have embraced Christianity through him. He

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<sup>732</sup> See his personal account written when he was a deacon in the *Book of Liturgies* in the possession of the Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal in Kottayam.

had two churches constructed and registered in the name of the Apostolic See: the church of the cross in Malikorush north of Travancore, and the church of Mar Ignatius in Arthat-Konnamkulam where he was buried.

Eustathius Saliba knew good Syriac in which he penned two books on the belief of the Syrian Orthodox Church. They were also published in Malayalam. He wrote down the account of the journey of Patriarch 'Abd Allah II to Malabar and some letters. He also composed a *memro* (metrical ode) in the Sarugite (twelve-syllabic) meter in answer to the criticism of Aphram Rahmani, Syrian Catholic patriarch. He translated from Arabic into Syriac the prayers recited in times of adversity and was published by the Chorepiscopus Malphono Matta Konat.

## CHAPTER NINE: PATRIARCH ELIAS III VISITS THE CHURCH OF MALABAR

In December, 1929, Lord Irwin arrived in Kottayam-Travancore as the King's Viceroy in India. Shortly after his arrival, he visited the ancient church of the Virgin known as the Great Church of Kottayam. He was welcomed by Metropolitan Julius Qoro, the Patriarchal Deputy, and Dioscorus Tuma, metropolitan of the Canaanite diocese and some thirty clergymen. He viewed the two antique crosses visited by Western tourists every year. He put down his name and the date of his visit in the old visitor's book kept at the church. Of all the Syrian churches, he chose to visit this particular one. Upon learning of Irwin's visit, Patriarch Elias III, then in Mosul, sent him a telegram on December 4, 1929, welcoming his visit to the Church of Kottayam. Lord Irwin replied on December 6, thanking him graciously. On this same day, a delegation consisting of Metropolitans Julius Qoro, the Patriarchal Deputy, Dioscorus Tuma, Dionysius Mikha'il of the Kottayam diocese, and Timothy Awgen of the Kandanad diocese met with Lord Irwin in his government's headquarters. Irwin welcomed them with alacrity. Meantime, the schismatic Gurgis and some of his followers paid a visit to Lord Irwin informing him of the church's problems. Displeased with the bad condition of the Syrian church, he promised the metropolitans, and Gurgis, of his willingness to solve these problems.

In the fall of 1930, Gurgis who styled himself a "Catholicos" and three metropolitans supporting him submitted a petition to Lord Irwin requesting him to prevail on the patriarch to convene a council in order to solve the problem of the Syrian Church. On December 6, 1930, Irwin sent a telegram

to Patriarch Elias III asking him to convene such a conference.<sup>733</sup> The patriarch replied on December 15, thanking Irwin for his concern and promising to visit Malabar personally in order to solve the problem.<sup>734</sup> On December 31, the British High Commissioner in Baghdad, Sir Francis Humphreys informed Major Wilson, British Political Officer and Senior Administrator of Mosul, of Lord Irwin's telegram.<sup>735</sup> He pledged to do everything he could to support the patriarch's visit to Malabar. When Humphreys became sure of the patriarch's journey, he sent a telegram to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, informing him that the patriarch was on his way to Malabar.

On Monday February 6, 1931, Patriarch Elias left Mosul accompanied by Metropolitan Qlemis (Clement) Yuhanna 'Abachi, the two monks Quryaqos and Yesu', his secretary Zakariyya Shakir and attorney Elias Khad-duri as interpreter. The Iraqi authorities in Mosul, Kirkuk, Baghdad and Basra, extended to him due honor. The High Commissioner held a sumptuous formal dinner in his honor. He had two audiences with King Faisal I. On Saturday February 28, 1931, he sailed on board the steamer Warsaw, and on March 5 arrived in Karachi. At the harbor he was welcomed by Metropolitan Julius Qoro, the Patriarchal Deputy and Athanasius Paul, metropolitan of Malabar. The Viceroy issued orders to the Indian authorities to extend to the patriarch due respect and assistance in his travels.

On Friday evening, he left Karachi by the express train and reached Delhi on Sunday morning March 8. He stayed at Delhi as the Viceroy's guest. On the next day the Viceroy paid him a visit. In the evening of Thursday, he left Delhi by train to Madras arriving in the city on Saturday. He was received at the station by the secretary of the General Governor of Madras John Stanley, the Anglican bishop of Madras and notable Syrians with their priest Paul. At Madras, the patriarch was the guest of the General Governor for seven days. On Friday afternoon March 20, he left Madras for Malabar arriving at Alway in the afternoon of the next day. He was received at the station by a great crowd of Syrians headed by the Metropolitans Dionysius Mikha'il, and Dioscorus Tuma and a great number of priests and deacons. He was taken in a great pageant to the Seminary of Alway, center of the diocese of Angamali.

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<sup>733</sup> For this telegram see *al-Hikma*, V (Jerusalem: January, 1931): 41–42. It should be noted that in this telegram, Lord Erwin asked the patriarch to attend this council personally if possible. TRANS.

<sup>734</sup> See *al-Hikma*, *Ibid.*, 42. TRANS.

<sup>735</sup> See Humphreys letter to Wilson dated January 31, 1930, in *al-Hikma*, *Ibid.*, 42–43. TRANS.

On Monday March 23, the excommunicated Dionysius Gurgis called on the patriarch offering him homage and obedience. The patriarch blessed him and absolved him from the anathema. At the end of March the patriarch circulated a proclamation from the Alway seminary to the Syrian churches and community about absolving Gurgis from anathema. They rejoiced for Gurgis's restoration. On March 30, 1931, he visited the maharani, Regent Mother, in her summer resort at Parmad and also called on the British Resident.

On April 3, the patriarch visited the capital of Cochin. He was welcomed at the borders by Timothy Awgen, metropolitan of Kandanad and two priests. The royal palace provided a car for his use. On this day, he called on the aged maharaja of Cochin. On April, 15, the maharaja's secretary returned the visit at the vicarage of the Church of St. Jirjis in Karingachira. On April 28, the patriarch called on the British Resident for the second time. He also called on the young maharaja in Trivandrum, capital of Travancore. Two days later, he called on the maharani and spent five days in the capital as guest of the government. The maharajas of Cochin and the maharani, the Regent Mother of Travancore, presented him with gold decorations.

Patriarch Elias III visited the entire churches of the dioceses and was welcomed by the government's authorities as he traveled. Meantime, he ordained chorepiscopi, priests and deacons. He consecrated some churches, and laid down the foundation stone for the Monastery of Mary Magdalene of the Canaanites. He endorsed canons and rules for the Monasteries of Mar Antonius for monks and the Convent of Mary Mother of God for nuns. He headed the religious celebrations and the annual meeting of the priests of the dioceses. He also presided over the Mar Gregorius Conference for Young Men. Finally, he prepared to consecrate the Holy Chrism.<sup>736</sup>

In order to solve the conflict within the church of Malabar, Patriarch Elias convened several meetings at Alway, Karingachira and Pampady attended by Gurgis. In June, he asked the dioceses to send delegations to the synod to be convened at the church of Kurupumpady on June 22. Metropolitans Julius, Athanasius, Clement, Dionysius, Dioscorus and Timothy responded. Also many clergymen and lay people attended. On December 1, the patriarch convened another meeting at the church of Pampady attended

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<sup>736</sup> For a detailed account of the visit of Patriarch Elias III to Malabar see *al-Hikma*, V, No, 2 (Jerusalem, January, 1931):81–94, April, 132139, 181–182, (June, 219–228, and (September), 322–334. TRANS.

by the previous metropolitans, six priests and twelve lay men. Thus, the patriarch was day and night concerned with the restoration of peace to the church without heeding his own health. Unfortunately, he departed this life still in the midst of struggle with his desire unfulfilled. On Thursday February 11, 1932, he was invited to the church of Maninkara in Omalloor. He became very tired from the rough road and the multitudes of people who crowded him. On Saturday, he died from heart attack and was buried in a spot near the old church. A magnificent church was erected over his grave in the name of Mar Ignatius. He was the first Patriarch of Antioch to die and was buried in Malabar. Forty days after his death, his retinue returned to Syria.

Patriarch Elias, may God be gracious to him, was pious, zealous, humble and cheerful. He wanted peace for the sons of the church and its enemies alike. He was kind-hearted and characterized by a glittering countenance. Such magnificent traits rendered him loved by friends and foes alike. His grave became a shrine visited by both Christians and heathens. About ten thousand people flock to visit it on his commemoration day. Some sick people were healed from their maladies.

## **CHAPTER TEN: DIONYSIUS GURGIS, METROPOLITAN OF MALABAR**

Dionysius Gurgis was born in the village of Malappally in the middle of the nineteenth century. Patriarch Pelter IV ordained him a deacon. He studied under Metropolitan Gregorius Gurgis 'Abd Allah and then under Metropolitan Gregorius Gurgis of Niranam. He excelled in the Syriac language and religious sciences. Metropolitan Gregorius ordained him a priest and appointed him a teacher at the seminary in Kottayam. When Patriarch Peter granted the priest Matta Konat the degree of Malphono (comparable to a Ph. D.), Dionysius Gurgis was urged to write in Syriac a thesis entitled *Homologia* (statement or confession of faith) containing dogmas of the Syrian Orthodox Church. The *homologia* pleased the patriarch who granted him the degree of Malphono. Gurgis translated the thesis and published in the Malayalam language.

In 1895, Dionysius Gurgis accompanied Metropolitan Gregorius Gurgis on his journey to Jerusalem. Upon rerunning home, Metropolitan Joseph appointed him a principal of Mar Dionysius High School in Kottayam and invested him with the monastic habit. When Patriarch 'Abd al-Masih II was deposed and 'Abd Allah became patriarch in 1906, Dionysius Gurgis addressed a letter in the fall of this year, to his friend the priest 'Abd al-



Ahad of Ba'shiqa, that he and all the Syrians of Malabar were delighted by the installation of the new patriarch.

In 1908, Patriarch 'Abd Allah II ordained Gurgis a metropolitan, without a diocese, at St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem. He called him Dionysius at his ordination. When the patriarch visited Malabar, Dionysius rebelled against him which urged the patriarch to excommunicate him on Friday May 27, 1911, before Pentecost. On August 17 or 18, the patriarch convened a council at Alway attended by the delegates of 230 churches. They endorsed the patriarch's anathema of Dionysius Gurgis and designated Cyril Paul as Metropolitan of Malabar.

On Saturday October 1, 1911, the patriarch departed Malabar without absolving Dionysius Gurgis. He was seen off to Bombay by Metropolitan Eustathius Saliba, Metropolitan Athanasius Paul, Malphono Matta Konat and the Chorepiscopus Quryaqos, son of the priest Jacob Kodyat from Tiruvalla.<sup>737</sup>

In 1912, Dionysius Gurgis invited the deposed Patriarch 'Abd al-Masih II to Malabar. He had him ordain the monk Fannus Kallisery a metropolitan with the name of Gregorius Gurgis. He also had him ordain the monk Joakim of Kandand a metropolitan with the name of Iyawannis, the monk Gurgis of Vakataanam a metropolitan with the name of Philoxenus, and Iyawannis Paul as catholicos with the name of Basilius.<sup>738</sup> On May 10, 1912, the Turkish government addressed a letter through Tawfiq Pasha to Sir E. Grey in London, requesting him to write to the governments of Travancore and Cochin that Patriarch 'Abd al-Masih has been deposed. They feared that he might create trouble for the Syrian Church of Malabar.

In 1923, the Court of Appeal in Trivandrum confirmed the excommunication of Dionysius Gurgis. Gurgis journeyed to the Za'faran Monastery

<sup>737</sup> See the journey of Patriarch 'Abd Allah II, to Malabar in the letter of Eustathius Saliba to the priest 'Abd al-Ahad of Ba'shiqa dated Novemebr 7, 1911.

<sup>738</sup> Iyawannis Paul was ordained a celibate priest for the church of Kolanchery at the age of sixteen. He studied under Cyril Joakim and remained in his company. In 1877, Patriarch Peter IV ordained him a metropolitan for the diocese of Kandand. He bought a tract of land in the town of Muwatopoza on which he built a vicarage. He inversed the priest Quryaqos of Pampady with the monastic habit and ordained a great number of deacons and priests. He gave his nephew (son of his brother) all the money he had collected. In 1911, Patriarch 'Abd Allah II suspended him from service. In 1912, 'Abd al-Masih II ordained him a catholicos. He died on April 20, 1913 and was buried in the small church of Pampakoda. No one attended his funeral except one priest from his followers from the said church.

to appeal to Patriarch Elias III to absolve him from the anathema. He handed the patriarch a letter of the alleged metropolitans expressing their repentance and subjection to the Apostolic See. The patriarch promised to absolve him if he fulfilled some conditions. Gurgis returned to Malabar without being absolved of his anathema. But when Patriarch Elias journeyed to Malabar, Gurgis called on him on March 10, 1931, two days after arriving at the seminary at Alway. He expressed remorse, contrition and vowed subjection to the patriarch. The patriarch, feeling compassion on him because of his old age, absolved him from the anathema declaring that he was no more called Gurgis but Metropolitan Dionysius. He hugged him and congratulated him. The patriarch summoned him whenever he had a question about the problem of the church of Malabar. Still he found him callous, intransigent and tyrannical in disposing church Affairs. The patriarch also discovered that, contrary to his disingenuous claims, Dionysius Gurgis intended to render the church of Malabar independent of the Apostolic See. Gurgis did not agree to the conditions arranged by the patriarch and the metropolitans assisted by priests, professors and attorneys in many sessions. After the death of Patriarch Elias and the enthronement of the new Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum in 1933, Dionysius Gurgis exchanged letters with the patriarch until he parted this life on February 23, 1934.

Dionysius Gurgis was an excellent teacher, an able writer, a powerful orator and polemic. He was well versed in the Holy Scripture with tendency toward Protestantism. He was proficient in the Syriac language in which he penned a splendid book of reading for school beginners. In this book he included an account of some aspects of his journey to Jerusalem in the company of Metropolitan Gregorius Gurgis in 1895. He also included in it several letters. He translated from the Syriac into Malayalam several service orders and *memre* (metrical odes, discourses) and had them published. Furthermore, he penned the book entitled *Homologia*, mentioned above. He was cross-eyed with shaking hands. However, he was selfish, dictatorial and void of conscience.<sup>739</sup>

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<sup>739</sup> In 1927, his supporters declared Philoxenus Gurgis a catholicos for the second time. He ordained, as the priest, Gurgis M.A., claims a bishop for the Monastery of Bethany. Philoxenus passed away in 1927, from unsuccessful surgery, and his followers ordained Gregorius Gurgis a Catholicos who is still occupying this position. Gregorius ordained the monk Quryaqos of Pampady a metropolitan with the name of Gregorius. He also ordained as metropolitans, Theophilus Jacob, Philoxenus Gurgis, Severus Joseph, Theodosius Alexius and Dionysius Tuma. However, Metropolitans Iyawannis, Theophilus and Severus left his communion

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: ATHANASIOUS PAUL, METROPOLITAN OF MALABAR AND HIS DEPUTY GREGORIUS GURGIS

### Athanasius Paul

He is Paul Matthew from the family of Pynadath. He was born in Angamali on January 10, 1869. On Whit Sunday April 8, 1879, Metropolitan Cyril Gurgis of Angamali ordained him a psalter (reader) for the church of Akaparampu in the diocese of Angamali. Under him he studied Syriac and religious sciences. But he studied English at Kottayam. On November 12, 1899, Metropolitan Gregorius Gurgis of Niranam ordained him as a celibate priest at the chapel of the seminary at Kottayam. On November 15, he invested him with the monastic habit. For some years, Paul remained at the seminary of Paramalla. For his administrative ability, good conduct and loyalty to the Apostolic See, the diocese of Angamali nominated him to be a metropolitan. Accordingly, Patriarch 'Abd Allah II ordained him a metropolitan with the name of Athanasius at the church of Akaparampu on Ascension Day May 27, 1910. He was also entrusted with the administration of the diocese of Cochin. Upon the death of Cyril Paul, metropolitan of Malabar, church delegates met at the seminary at Alway, on January 18, 1918, headed by the Patriarchal Deputy Metropolitan Eustathius Saliba. They elected Athanasius a Metropolitan of Malabar. His election was confirmed by Patriarch Elias III who also entrusted to him the diocese of Kandanad. He administered this diocese until 1927.

At the beginning of June, 1927, the patriarch ordained the monk Awgen son of priest Abraham, previously mentioned, a metropolitan for the diocese of Kandanad with the name of Timothy. But the administration of this diocese was entrusted once more to Athanasius Paul in 1943 when Timothy joined the rebellious Dionysius Gurgis. Paul opposed Gurgis and his partisans with vehement apostolic zeal. In 1931, after the patriarch absolved Dionysius Gurgis of his anathema, he left only the dioceses of Angamali and Cochin to Paul's administration.

Upon the death of Dionysius Gurgis, the metropolitans and church delegates of clergy and laymen met at the seminary in Alway and elected Paul a metropolitan for Malabar. He was endorsed by Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum. He still holds this position. In 1945, he began to feel the burden and aches of old age. He addressed letters to the churches of the diocese of

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and joined the Catholics as independent metropolitans. Philoxenus died in this same year (1927).

Angamali asking them to provide him with an assistant. The churches' delegates met at the seminary in Alway on May 4, 1945, presided by Paul himself. They chose the priest Gurgis Vayaliparampil of Paul's family as his secretary. Paul also addressed letters to the churches of the diocese of Cochin to elect a metropolitan. The delegates met and chose the monk Paul from Cheria as a metropolitan. Both priest Gurgis and Paul journeyed to Homs, Syria in June, 1946, where Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum, ordained them metropolitans. Then, they returned home.

Athanasius Paul built more than twenty churches in his diocese and completed the structure of the seminary at Alway. He ordained more than a hundred priests, three of whom he clothed with the monastic habit.

### **Gregorius Gurgis**

Gregorius Gurgis was born in the village of Nedompachery-Angamali on Monday July 4, 1900. His father was Tuma from the ancient family of Vayaliparampil in Penadat, and mother was Susan, niece of the notable Varki of the family of Chilatomkarry of the village of Thorty. He received good upbringing by his parents and his virtuous grandfather Kurid. He received some education at his village and then enrolled in the English school at Alway. Upon receiving the high school certificate, he was appointed a teacher at the Syrian school in Vadikara. Four years later, he entered the United Syrian College in Alway and received a B.A. degree in 1931 from the University of Madras. In the same year, he entered the Teachers College in Madras and obtained a diploma. Because members of his family have been serving the church and produced more than a hundred priests in the past, Gregorius Gurgis, following in their footsteps, decided to join the priesthood. On March 20, 1932, Metropolitan Athanasius Paul ordained him a psalter and invested him with the monastic habit at the Alway Seminary. Gurgis began to study the Syriac language, religious sciences and church rites under Abraham, priest of the lesser church of Kottamankulam. On November 1, 1934, Metropolitan Julius Qoro ordained him a Qoroyo (the lowest rank of the diaconate) and on January 1, 1934, ordained him a half-deacon. On December 14, 1936, Athanasius Paul ordained him a priest at the church of Angamali. In 1939, he entered Mar Ignatius Theological Seminary in Omalloor and spent a few months reading Syriac and theological books. He left the seminary and then returned to it in 1945. In this year the diocese of Angamali chose him as a suffragan to its aged Metropolitan Athanasius. In June, 1946, he sailed for Homs, Syria. In July, Metropolitan Yuhanna 'Abachi invested him with the monastic habit, and on August 4 of this year, Patriarch Barsoum ordained him a metropolitan at the Cathedral

of Homs and called him Gregorius at his ordination. He visited the Holy Places in Jerusalem and returned home at the beginning of October. In 1948, he established a high school in his village which cost him 33, 000 rupees. In the next year he constructed four church buildings. He also constructed a splendid auditorium on the land which belonged to the Alway seminary for out-of town students. In this same year, he bought for the seminary a press for 10, 000 rupees and founded a church magazine published by this press. So far he ordained thirty-five priests and deacons.

Gregorius Gurgis' accomplishments are numerous. In 1923–1924, and 1933, he was elected a general secretary of Sunday Schools. By his effort the number of these schools increased from 82 to 230. In 1925–1926, he was elected a general secretary of the Mar Gregorius Syrian Students Conference. In 1936, he founded a sanatorium in the government's hospital in Cochin for the treatment of Syrians infected with leprosy. In 1939, he established an English junior high school in his village in the name of Mar Athanasius and became its principal. In 1942, the Patriarchal Deputy, Metropolitan Julius Qoro, appointed him a priest for the churches of Madras for one year.

Moreover, for three years Gregorius toured the entire Syrian churches of Malabar preaching and converting more than two hundred heathens to Christianity. In 1946, Metropolitan Athanasius Paul delegated him to investigate the condition of the church's communicants outside India. He visited Malaya, Pinank, Singapore, Ceylon, Johore, Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh. He journeyed to Ceylon and visited Colombo, Kandy and Jaffna. In 1949, he toured most of India including Calcutta, Asam, Penris, Licknow, Delhi, Bombay, Poona and Mysore preaching, evangelizing and celebrating the Holy Eucharist.

Gregorius penned the *Faith of the Church* in seven parts for the benefit of the Sunday Schools, *The Story of Joseph* for the Sunday Schools, a manual for the teachers of Sunday Schools, a treatise on the *Sacrament of Confession*, a treatise on *Sanatorium for Sinners*, a treatise on the *Friend of Sinners*, a detailed biography of Patriarch Elias III, and an account of his journey to Syria.

**CHAPTER TWELVE: METROPOLITAN JULIUS QORO, THE  
PATRIARCHAL DEPUTY, DIONYSIUS MIKHA'IL,  
METROPOLITAN OF KOTTAYAM, SEVERUS PAUL,  
METROPOLITAN OF COCHIN, AND CLEMENT ABRAHAM,  
METROPOLITAN OF THE CANAANITES' DIOCESE**

**Julius Elias Qoro**

Julius is son of Malke Qoro. He was born in Mardin in July, 1881. He enrolled in the school of the Forty Martyrs. In 1902, he entered the Za'faran Monastery. On June 16, 1905, he was clothed with the monastic habit. In the next year, Patriarch 'Abd Allah II made him his secretary. In 1908, he was ordained a priest and accompanied the patriarch to Jerusalem, Constantinople and London. He had two audiences with King Edward VII and had lunch at his table. He also, visited Paris, Egypt and India. In the fall of 1911, he left India for Jerusalem. He became a prior of the Za'faran Monastery and in charge of its press. The Ottoman Sultan Muhammad Rashad V granted him a decoration of the second degree. On September 23, 1923, Patriarch Elias III, ordained him a metropolitan at the church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin and delegated him to Malabar to investigate the problems of the church.<sup>740</sup> In 1926, Qoro journeyed to Jerusalem accompanied by the monks Mikha'il and Tuma of Malabar to be ordained metropolitans by the patriarch. He then returned to Malabar. In the next year, Metropolitan Eustathius, Patriarchal Deputy to Malabar, was afflicted with a chronic disease which incapacitated him. Qoro was designated as a Patriarchal Deputy to Malabar.

The new Patriarchal Deputy had a two-story monastery built in Mallikorush and a splendid vicarage in Kunnamkulam. He also purchased a piece of land in Kottayam for building a church center. In 1932, he founded a monastery in the name of Mar Ignatius to house the grave of Patriarch Elias III in Omalloor. He journeyed to Homs, Syria to participate in the synod to elect a new patriarch. In December, 1933, he endorsed the election of Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum. He returned to India taking with him the monk 'Abd al-Ahad of Bartulli (author of this book, Later Metropolitan of Lebanon and then patriarch of Antioch). In the next year (1934) he opened a seminary at the Monastery of Mar Ignatius to which monk 'Abd al-Ahad was appointed a teacher. He and monk 'Abd al-Ahad endeavored to erect a magnificent church over the grave of Patriarch Elias III. Metropolitan Qoro

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<sup>740</sup> See the Patriarch's letter addressed to him dated September 26, 1923.

also constructed two more churches in Mulanthuruthi and Thompon, and still another one in Kottayam. Furthermore, he had the church of Kunnamkulam renovated. He also founded Mar Ignatius Monastery for monks and the Virgin Convent for nuns. He succeeded in winning a Protestant mission in Malabar and a Catholic mission in Honavar with their institutions to the fold of the Syrian church. Qoro ordained a number of chorepiscopi, priests, monks and deacons. He is still laboring in the field of the church and protecting the interests of the Apostolic See.<sup>741</sup>

### **Dionysius Mikha'il**

Dionysius Mikha'il was born in the village of Kayankulam On May 16, 1898. His father was an evangelist and eloquent orator. On December 25, 1898, he became a psalter (reader) and studied the Syriac language, religious sciences and English in Kottayam. In 1906, he was ordained a deacon and then a celibate priest for the church of Kayankulam. He was twice elected to the parliament of Travancore. In 1926, he was dispatched by his diocese of Kottayam to Patriarch Elias III, who invested him with the monastic habit at St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem on October 4. On October 11, he ordained him a metropolitan for the Kottayam diocese and its dependencies and named him Dionysius at his ordination. He returned to Malabar and began building churches, preaching and ordaining priests and deacons. He ordained forty-seven priests. Also, he converted five hundred heathens to Christianity. Most of the time, he resided at the Monastery of Mar Sharbil near the village of Puthuppally.

### **Severus Paul**

He was born in the village of Cheria-Cochin on November 21, 1910. On December 10, 1929, Metropolitan Athanasius Paul ordained him a deacon. At the Alway seminary, he studied the Syriac language and religious sciences under the priest Abraham Marachery. On July 23, 1934, the said metropolitan ordained him a priest. On August 6, he clothed him with the monastic habit. In 1945, he journeyed to Homs, Syria to be ordained a metropolitan for the diocese of Cochin. On July 22, 1946, Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum ordained him a metropolitan at the Cathedral of Homs. He returned to Malabar and established eight new churches in his diocese. He ordained eighteen priests and deacons.

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<sup>741</sup> I met Metropolitan Julius Qoro in Basra, Iraq in 1954, who had then retired and left Malabar. TRANS.

### **Qlemis (Clement) Abraham**

He is son of Abraham, son of Idikola of the Vaila Canaanite family. He was born in the village of Rani in 1917. Metropolitan Dioscorus Tuma ordained him a psalter. He studied English in a school at Kottayam and enrolled in an Indian university where he obtained an M.A. degree. He was appointed a teacher at Mar Severus High School in Rani. He also studied Syriac and religious sciences at Mar Ignatius Seminary in Omalloor. He continued his studies for one and a half years at St Ephraim Seminary in Mosul, Iraq (from 1949 to 1951). He was chosen by the Canaanite diocese to be their metropolitan and informed Patriarch Barsoum of their choice. The Patriarch summoned Abraham to Homs and invested him with the monastic habit on April 8, 1951. On April 15, he ordained him a metropolitan and called him Qlemis (Clement) at his ordination. After visiting the Holy Places in Jerusalem, he returned to Malabar after Easter and was received with a pompous welcome.

### **CHAPTER THIRTEEN: MAR IGNATIUS SEMINARY AND REV. MONK ‘ABD AL-AHAD OF BARTULLI**

In 1934, His Grace Metropolitan Mar Julius Qoro the Patriarchal Deputy, established a theological school in Mar Ignatius Monastery. It was attended by thirty deacons divided over three classes. The curriculum included Syriac literature, theology, Scriptures, ecclesiastical history and oratory. Classes were taught in Syriac. The students excelled in the Syriac language and were able to communicate in it with ease. The teachers included the monk ‘Abd al-Ahad (author of this book), the monk Gurgis and the deacon Samuel of Malabar.

Rev. ‘Abd al-Ahad journeyed to Malabar in the company of the Patriarchal Deputy Metropolitan Julius Qoro in 1933 by order of the patriarch. In the next year, Metropolitan Qoro ordained him a deacon and then a priest. He entrusted to him the administration of the school. For thirteen years the school operated successfully. Together with Metropolitan Qoro, Rev. ‘Abd al-Ahad had a splendid church built over the grave of Patriarch Elias III. In 1946, he was permitted by Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum to visit his family in Iraq. Monk ‘Abd al-Ahad left Malabar and arrived in Mosul in July, 1946. On August 16 of this year, *Al-Mashriq* (The East), a magazine owned and published by Rev. Monk Bulus (Paul) Behnam (later Metropolitan Gregorius of Mosul and all Iraq. d. 1969) welcomed Rev. ‘Abd al-Ahad. Under the title “Rev. ‘Abd al-Ahad Returns Home,” *al-Mashriq* said, “We have learned that our Lord the Patriarch Mar Ignatius Aphram I, Barsoum has permitted Rev. ‘Abd al-Ahad Tuma of Bartulli to visit his homel-



land after thirteen years of remarkable work in Malabar. Rev. 'Abd al-Ahad is a zealous priest. He exerted a great effort in the spiritual and cultural fields of the church of Malabar. During his long stay in Malabar he preached, taught and offered counsel. He was the principal of Mar Ignatius Theological School which graduated many proficient students in theology, Syriac and church literature. He was highly admired by the Syrian Orthodox of that country. Upon learning that he was leaving them the Syrians of Travancore became grieved. Many, who appreciated his spiritual accomplishments gathered to bid him farewell. His students held a party at the theological school where they expressed their gratitude in Syriac, English and Malayalam. The party was headed by the English bishop and attended by Metropolitan Julius Qoro, the Patriarchal Deputy, sixty priests and many Syrian notables. Rev. 'Abd al-Ahad was presented with a gold decoration and a paten and chalice by Mr. C. K. Koshi. The party was concluded with the speech of Dr. Thomas Palampadam, the mayor of Kottayam. The students of Rev. 'Abd al-Ahad also gave a farewell address expressing their appreciation of his spiritual and cultural achievements. It was printed in Syriac, with English and Malayalam translations. Copies were distributed to those present.

Rev. 'Abd al-Ahad is an able writer and historian. He wrote in Arabic, Syriac and Malayalam. His printed works include: 1— An 80 page biography of Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum in Malayalam. It contained the patriarch's writings some of which were published in different international periodicals and his efforts in the service of the church. 2— Substantiating the dogmas of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Malayalam. 3— *The Book of Explicit Truth* elaborating the authority of the See of Antioch and the dignity of the Maphrianate of the East. 4— Many articles published in different periodicals of Malabar dealing with the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church and its dogma 5— He was editor-in chief of a religious magazine in Malayalam.<sup>742</sup>

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR YESTERDAY AND TODAY

### 1. Number of the Churches

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<sup>742</sup> After departing India, the first volume of the *History of the Syrian Orthodox Church* by Rev. 'Abd al-Ahad was published in Malayalam. Of his writings still in manuscript form is 1— *Homilies for the Whole Year in Arabic*. 2— *History of the Patriarchs of Antioch* from St. Peter to the present Patriarch Aphram I, Barsoum.

In Malabar, prior to the Twentieth Century, St. Thomas preached in Malabar in 52 A. D., and established seven churches. The Syrian Edessan immigrants to Malabar in 345 A. D., built a church in Kodangallor. At the beginning of the sixteenth century some Syrians of Malabar established sixty-five churches. In the last decade of this century churches were founded Mulanthuruthi, Kottayam, Chengam, Kallissery and Parum. At the end of the seventeenth century there were fourteen churches south of Travancore. At this time, Metropolitan Hidayat Allah built a magnificent church in the village of Rackat with the money he brought from his own country. Prior to the middle of the eighteenth century, the Syrians had forty-two churches in Malabar along with more than eighteen churches used jointly by them and the Roman Catholics.<sup>743</sup> At the end of 1751, the Syrians lived in forty-seven towns and villages and had forty-five churches.<sup>744</sup> Maphryono Shukr Allah also built a church in Mattanchery in Cochin. Around 1769, he established the Monastery of Mar Behnam in Vaitikal. Afterwards Dionysius I built a church in Puthencave, and a seminary in Kottayam between 1813 and 1815. Ward and Conner mention that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Syrians had fifty-five churches in Travancore. In 1858, Eustathius 'Abd al-Nur, metropolitan of Jerusalem, mentioned that the Syrian churches numbered ninety, six of which belonged to the Canaanites. Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal mentioned in 1864 the names of ninety-four churches apart from small chapels. The deacon Stephen of Azekh, based on the histories of Malabar published in 1874, mentioned the names of one hundred sixty-five churches in Malabar.

Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburji wrote at the end of 1751, that there were between two to five priests and deacons in each of the churches. Metropolitan 'Abd al-Nur said that in Malabar the number of priests was six hundred.

## **2. The Number of Syrian Communicants in Malabar Prior to the Twentieth Century**

St. Thomas converted a great number of Indians to Christianity. When four hundred Syrians of Edessa emigrated to Malabar and lived in Kodangallor,

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<sup>743</sup> See P. C. Cheriyan, *The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society* (1935), 54, quoting Whitehorse.

<sup>744</sup> See the journey of Maphryono Shukr Allah by the Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi in *Al-Majalla al-Patriarchiyya*, 7, 102.

the Syrians of Malabar, by their effort, came to be known as Christians. In 825 A. D., Iraqi emigrants lived in Kollam. They multiplied and enjoyed full freedom. They were able to establish a small kingdom. Around 1504, they numbered 30, 000 souls and in 1653, 200, 000. However, a great number of them were forced to join the Franks (Portuguese). Chorepiscopus Jirjis Tunburchi, already mentioned, said that in 1751, they numbered 12, 242 houses totaling 61, 210 souls with an average of five souls for each house, or 122, 000 souls with an average of ten souls to each house. The Carmelite missionary Paoli, said that between 1776 and 1789, the Syrians numbered 50, 000. Dr. Kerr who visited Malabar in 1806, says that their number was 80, 000. Ward and Conner say that the Syrians numbered 35, 000 souls in Travancore alone. Bishop Athanasius Stephen wrote in 1849, that they numbered 50, 000 houses.<sup>745</sup> In 1875, Metropolitan 'Abd al-Nur said that the Syrians numbered 70, 000 houses. In 1876, the Diwan (prime minister) of Travancore, based on a census conducted by order of Patriarch Peter IV, estimated that the Syrians of Malabar numbered 295, 770 souls. It was then that the patriarch divided the church of Malabar into seven dioceses. Thus, the number of Syrians increased especially by Roman Catholics and heathens who joined the Syrian church. In 1889, were founded the dioceses of Ceylon, Goa and southern Kanra. In 1910, the Canaanites diocese was founded.

### **3. The Number of Churches, Priests and Parishioners of Malabar in the Twentieth Century**

Today, there are ten Syrian dioceses in India. They are the dioceses of Angamali, Kandanad, Cochin, Niranam, Thompon, Kollam, the Canaanites, Ceylon, Goa and southern Kanra and the churches of the Apostolic See.

Metropolitan Gregorius Gurgis is in charge of the diocese of Angamali. It consists of seventy churches, eighty priests and twenty-five deacons.

The diocese of Kandanad has no metropolitan. It is entrusted to Metropolitan Athanasius Paul. It consists of eighty-five churches, ninety priests and five deacons.

The diocese of Cochin is headed by Metropolitan Severus Paul. It consists of thirty-five churches and forty priests

The diocese of Kottayam is headed by Metropolitan Dionysius Mikha'il. It consists of sixty-four churches and sixty-five priests.

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<sup>745</sup> See his letter to Chorepiscopus Philip Edavazhikal dated July 16, 1849.

The diocese of Niranam has no metropolitan. It consists of sixty-seven churches and sixty-five priests.

The diocese of Thompon has no metropolitan. It consists of sixty-five churches and sixty-five priests.

The diocese of Kollam has no metropolitan. It consists of sixty-three churches and seventy-one priests.

These dioceses of the south have been entrusted to Metropolitan Dionysius Mikha'il. They also contain partisans of Dionysius Gurgis.

The Canaanites' diocese is headed by Metropolitan Clement Abraham. It consists of thirty-one churches, twenty-eight priests and four deacons.

The diocese of Ceylon, Goa and southern Kanra is administered by a general deputy. It consists of ten churches and six priests.

The churches of the Apostolic See are seven in number. They are administered by the Patriarchal Deputy Mar Julius Elias Qoro. There are also four monasteries administered by the Patriarchal Deputy. To these churches are added twelve monasteries. The total number of the parishioners of these dioceses is more than 700, 000.

Angamali is the largest diocese of Malabar. It has 125, 000 parishioners. Following in size is the diocese of Kandanad of 100, 000 parishioners. However, by order and organization the diocese of the Canaanites, which has 35, 000 parishioners, is the best. It has also a general deputy under the authority of the metropolitan, a secretary and a consulting assembly of clergymen. Its general assembly consists of one hundred thirty-one members of whom thirty-two are clergymen and the rest are laymen. It also has two societies for young men and young women. Further, it has ten missionaries with five centers. It claims thirty-five Sunday Schools and three high schools whose major language is English. One of these schools is in Rani. Mar Severus High School has 49 teachers and 1300 pupils; the other, St. Thomas High School, has 35 teachers and 1000 pupils. The Mary Magdalene High School for Girls at Chengam has 900 pupils. There are also five Junior High Schools with an enrollment of 2500 male and female pupils.

#### **4. Missions, Societies, Schools and Presses**

The church of Malabar has three missions preaching the Gospel to the heathens. One of them, The East Mission, has associations and schools. The other is Mar Ignatius Mission. The third is called Servants of the Cross.

The church has five organizations as follows:

1. The Annual Clergy Conference
2. Mar Gregorius Annual Students Conference

3. Young Syrian men Conference
4. Sunday Schools Society
5. The Virgin's Women Association

The church also claims 469 Sunday Schools of seven classes each. They have one uniform curriculum. It further claims 30 high schools whose major language is English. In addition, it claims many junior high schools, a college in Alway and three seminaries. One seminary is in Omalloor, the second is in Alway and the third is in Kottayam. Elementary, high school and higher education is prevalent among male and female students.

The church of Malabar has four printing presses: Mar Julius printing press in Pampakoda, St. Thomas printing press in the Alway Seminary and Mar Gregorius printing press in Kunnamkulam. The printing press at Alway publishes a religious magazine with the supervision of Metropolitan Gregorius Gurgis.

### 5. Social Decorum and Status of the Syrians of Malabar

The Syrians of Malabar enjoy a good reputation in Indian circles for their learning, character, fasting, prayer, faith, honesty and good treatment of others. They say prayers on Sundays in the churches and in the houses on weekdays. Usually, as head of the house, the man prays with the members of the family. They say prayer in Malayalam translated from Syriac by the Chorepiscopus Malphono Matta Konat. If one happens to pass through a street after sunset, he would hear the prayers of these people emanating from the mansions of the rich and the hutments of the poor. They read chapters of the Holy Scriptures during the prayer. Usually, clergymen pray in Syriac which they study in the seminaries. They are proficient in church rites and have translated some of them like the *busoyos* (supplicatory prayers) and the Gospels into Malayalam. Many of them speak and write the Syriac language with ease. In the past, they wrote their correspondence in Syriac. They follow the Western Rite that is the Rite of Syria. They devoutly observe fasting according to church canons. They are of strict faith and resolute hope.

In the seventh and eighth centuries, Chery Shankra Garir instituted a law for the heathens of India. It stated that the Indians are heathen by birth and not by conversion. This caused the Syrians of Malabar not to revert to heathenism. However, because church delegates from Syria and Iraq were not constantly dispatched to Malabar, and because long periods intervened between the death of a delegate and the arrival of the other, some pagan customs prevailed among the Syrians of Malabar.

The Syrian churches are accustomed to assign one week of the year to preaching. Usually, they invite the best speakers for this occasion. Thousands of Syrians attend this prayer gathering under a large canopy. It is truly a tremendous spiritual revival.

The Syrians enjoyed special privileges granted them by the maharajas of Travancore. They were allowed to use cannons to announce their religious festivals and celebrate pageants of their outstanding men. As of late, the Syrians were distinguished for serving their country with avid loyalty. They founded institutions of higher learning which graduated a group of highly educated people who have become the pride of society. They included lawyers, teachers, writers and the orators. For this reason, the maharajas appreciated them and appointed them to key positions in the government. A maharaja of Travancore commended them in 1880 saying that, "Your nation is ancient and a magnificent example to our glorious history. It is the repository of contentment, peace and loyalty. If it happened that Sri Par Sharma visited this ancient kingdom, he would find none like the Christian Syrian nation loyal to the state and characterized by remarkable deeds."



## The Author

Metropolitan Mar Severus Jacob Tuma (later Patriarch of Antioch 1957–1980), is a prolific writer whose works cover a wide spectrum of knowledge. He was well versed in Arabic, Syriac, English and Malayalam which he mastered during thirteen years of residence in Malabar, India. Of his distinguished publications we may cite: *Tarikh al-Kanisa al-Suryaniyya al-Hindiyya*, (1951), translated here; *Tarikh al-Kanisa al-Suryaniyya al-Antakiyya*, 2 Vols (Beirut, 1953 and 1957); *Difaqat al-Tib fi Tarikh Dayr al-Qiddis Mar Matta al-Ajib* (1961); *al-Shuhada al-Himyarriyyun al-Arab fi al-Watha'iq al-Suryaniyya* (1966); *Khutab al-Mahrajanat*, 2 Vols (1966–1977); *Sada al-Manabir* (Homilies, 1969); *al-La'ali' al-Manthura fi al-Aqwal al-Ma'thura*, 2 Vols (1967–1969); *Nafh al-'Abir aw Sirat al-Patriarch Mar Seveurs al-Kabir* (1970); *al-Barabin al-Hissiyya ala Taqarid al-Suryaniyya wa al-Arabiyya* (1969); *al-Ahaji fi Jibad al-Qiddis Mar Philoxenus al-Manbijji* (1970); *Hibat al-Iman aw al-Malphan Mar Yaqub al-Sarugi Isqif Batnan* (1971); *U'jubat al-Zaman aw Mar Aphram Nabi al-Suryan* (1970); *.al-Haqa'iq al-Jaliyya fi al-Abhath al-Tarikhiyya, al-Adabiyya was al-Falsafiyya* (1972); *al-Mujahid al-Rasuli al-Akbar Mar Yaqub al-Baradi'i* (1978). He has also contributed many treatises and articles on different subjects published to major Arabic Middle Eastern periodicals.





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